THE HISTORY OF ORACLES, AND THE CHEATS OF THE Pagan Priests.

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M DC XC IX.

THE

HISTORY

OF

ORACLES,

AND

CHEATS

OF THE

To the Right Honourable,

JOHN, Lord *Vaughan*,

Baron of *Emlyn* and *Mollinger*,

EARL of *CARBERY*,

AND

Kt. of the Hon^able *Order of the Bath*.

My LORD,

THE extraordinary Figure your Lordſhip makes in the foremoſt Rank of our Nobility, is too viſible to eſcape the Obſervation of all Men; if Dignity was now again to be the Reward of Vertue, as it originally was, your Lordſhip has ſo many undoubted Claims to it, that are ſufficient to enoble the meaneſt Extraction; Your wonderful and univerſal Learning, your exquiſite Judgment and Senſe, which makes you the laſt Appeal of all Controverſies, where Judgment, Wit and Learning have any ſhare, will juſtifie my Aſſertion. But to have all theſe

Noble Qualities illuſtrated with an Ancient and Noble Stock, is a Merit that very few can boaſt, and only you in that degree of Excellence.

This I ſhou'd not dare to ſay from my ſelf, as incapable of comprehending Excellencies of which I am my ſelf unfurniſh'd, but as the Opinion of your Lordſhip's abſent Friends, which is always the moſt ſincere; and I have an undeniable Teſtimony of this from the Judgment of a Gentleman eminent for his Wit and Learning, as for his Reſpect and Friendſhip for your Lordſhip, whom I have heard ſay more in your Praiſe, my LORD, than I dare with my rude Pencil copy after him.

The learned and ingenious *Fontanelle* is the Author of this Book I moſt humbly offer to your Patronage, which, as himſelf confeſſes in the Preface, he took moſtly from the famous *Vandale*, a Dutch-man. The Original was large and tedious: Our Author has left out all that might ſwell the Bulk of his Book, without any mighty Improvement or Pleaſure to the Reader, and ſo has made this perhaps, tho' only a Copy, better than the Original. If the Author and Tranſlator have done what may meet your Lordſhip's Approbation, I'm confident they will both conclude

they

they have both beſtow'd their Pains very agreeably, ſince by that they muſt be ſure of a certain Fame from their Performance.

This Edition falling to my Province, I thought I cou'd do no greater Honour to both, than to ſhelter them under ſo Glorious and Awful a Patronage: To which, my LORD, if I durſt, I wou'd fly my ſelf from thoſe Misfortunes that have too lately oppreſs'd me. And here, my LORD, I feel the moſt ſevere Influence of my Stars, that deny me Merit enough to hope it: But as Heaven looks with an equal Eye of Compaſſion on all that want its Protection, ſo I hope ſo very fair a Copy of that great Original, will pardon me, when I preſume to offer both my ſelf and this Book to your Lordſhip, and to ſubſcribe my ſelf, my LORD,

Your LORDSHIP's *moſt obedient and moſt humble Servant,*

SAM. BRISCOE.

[*Place this Epiſtle Dedicatory next after the Title of the Hiſtory of the Oracles.*]

THE PREFACE TO THE History of Oracles.

NOT *long ſince there fell into my Hands a ſmall Book written in* Latin, de Oraculis Ethnicorum, *or of the* Heathen Oracles, *compoſed by Mr.* Van-Dale, *Doctor of Phyſick, and printed in* Holland, *in which I found that the Author has ſtrenuouſly refuted the commonly received Opinion,* That the ancient *Oracles* were delivered by *Dæmons*, and that they ceaſed wholly at the coming of JESUS CHRIST. *The whole Work appeared to me to be full of Knowledge in Antiquity and profound Learning: Which gave me a great Curioſity to Tranſlate it, that the Ladies and thoſe Gentlemen, who do not much care to read* Latin, *might not be deprived of ſo agreeable and uſeful a Diſcourſe. But I reflect-*

reflected, that a Translation of this Book (tho' excellent in its Original) would not be so good, if too closely turned into French: *For Mr.* Van-Dale *wrote only for the Learned, and had reason to neglect those Ornaments and Softnesses which They do not esteem; he cites a great number of Passages very faithfully, and his Versions are wonderful exact when he Translates from the* Greek; *he enters also into a Discussion of many Points of Criticism, which, tho' they are not always necessary, yet they are always curious; and this he does, to gratifie the Learned, who care little for flourishing Reflections, Discourses of Morality, or pleasant Wit.*

Besides, Mr. Van-Dale *makes no difficulty very often to interrupt the Thread of his Discourse, and to introduce other things which present themselves: And from one Digression he sometimes passes to another, and so perhaps to a third. And herein he does not amiss, since those for whom he writes, are fitted for the Fatigue of Reading, and this learned Disorder does not at all embaras or perplex them. But those, for whom I design this Translation, would have been very ill accommodated, if I had taken this Method: The dies, and the major part of the Men of this Country, are indeed more pleased with the Graces and Turns of Expression and Thought*

than

than with the most exact Enquiries and profoundest Arguments: And being very fond of Ease, they desire to read Books written in a facile Method, that they may be the less obliged to a troublesome Attention. For this Reason, I laid by the thoughts of Translating, and thought it would be better, preserving the Foundation and principal Matter of the Work, to give it altogether another Form. And I confess, that no Man can extend this Liberty farther than I have done; for I have changed the whole Disposition of the Book, and have retrenched whatever appeared to me, either of too little Profit in it self, or of too little Pleasure to make amends for that little Profit. I have not only added all the Ornaments I could think of, but many things which prove or clear up what is in question upon the same Subject, and the same Passages, which Mr. Van-Dale *furnished me withal. I argue sometimes in a manner contrary to his, and I have not been scrupulous to insert many Reasons wholly my own: In fine, I have new cast and modelled the whole Work, and have put it into the same Order as I should have done at first (to have pleased my particular View) had I had so much Knowledge as Mr.* Van-Dale; *but, since I am far from it, I have borrowed his Learning, and ventured to make use of my own Wit and*

Fancy,

Fancy, (such as it is,) to adorn it. Nor should I have fail'd to have pursued his Method, had I had to do with the same Persons as he had. And if it shall happen that this comes to his Knowledge, I beseech him to pardon the Liberty I have taken, since it will serve to show the Excellency of his Book: For certainly what belongs to him, will still appear extremely fine, though it have passed through my Hands.

I have lately learned two things, which have Relation to this Book: The first out of the Tracts called * Nouvelles, *&c. or,* News from the Common-wealth of Letters, *which is, that Mr.* Mæbius, *Chief of the Professors of Divinity at* Leipsick, *has undertaken to confute Mr.* Van-Dale. *He acknowledges indeed, that* Oracles *did not cease at the Coming of* JESUS CHRIST, *(which will be indisputable when we shall have examined that Question;) but he will by no means yield, that* Dæmons *were not the Authors of* Oracles. *So that he himself makes a very considerable Invasion on the common Opinion, in allowing* Oracles *to extend themselves beyond the time of the Coming of* CHRIST; *and it will be a great Argument that they were not delivered by* Dæmons, *but by the Cheats of the Priests, if the Son of God did not silence them.* 'Tis cer-

* For the Month of *June*, 1686.

certain, that according to the uſual Acceptation of theſe two Notions, what deſtroys the one extremely ſhakes the other, or rather quite ruins it: And this perhaps, after the reading of this Book, will be readily acknowledged to be ſo.

But what is more remarkable, is, that I found in the ſame Book, that one of Mr. Mæbius's *ſtrongeſt Reaſons againſt Mr.* Van-Dale, *was, that* GOD *forbad the* Iſraelites *to conſult Wizards and the Spirits of* Python, *whence he concludes that* Python, *that is to ſay the* Dæmons, *managed the* Oracles, *and that it was by their Aid that the Ghoſt of* Samuel *was made to appear. Mr.* Van-Dale *may anſwer what he pleaſes, but for my part, I declare, that under the Name of* Oracles, *I do not pretend to comprehend* Magick: *In which it is not to be diſputed but that* Dæmons *are concerned; nor is it comprehended in what we commonly underſtand by the word* [Oracle] *not even according to the Sence of the ancient* Heathens, *who on one ſide regarded* Oracles *with Reſpect, as a part of their Religion, and on the other Hand had a Horror for* Magick, *as well as we. To go and conſult a* Necromancer, *or ſome Witch of* Theſſaly, *like* Ericto *in* Lucan, *was not called, going to an* Oracle; *and if we mark it, this Diſtinction is true, even*

accor-

according to the common Opinion, which affirms that Oracles *ceased at the Coming of* CHRIST, *and yet no Man can pretend that Magick then ceased. So that the Objection of Mr.* Mæbius *makes nothing against me, if he take the word* [Oracle] *in its ordinary and natural Signification, as well ancient as modern.*

The second thing I have to speak of is, that I am advertised that the reverend Father Thomasin, *a Priest of the Oratory, famous for so many excellent Books, wherein he has joyned solid Piety to profound Learning, has taken from this Book the Honour of first broaching this Paradox, by treating* Oracles *as meer Knavery (in his Book called,* The Method of Study, and of Teaching the Poets to Christian Children.) *I confess I was a little troubled at this, but I pacified my self with reading the twenty first Chapter of the eleventh Book of this Method, where I found nothing relating to my Opinion, save only that in the nineteenth Article, there are a very few words to the following Sence:* The true Reason (says he) why silence was imposed on *Oracles*, was, because by the Invocation of the Divine Word, truth has enlightned the World, and spread abroad abundance of Light far different from what was before, by which Men are emancipated

ted from the Illusions of Augurs and Astrologers, the Observation of the Entrails of Beasts, and the greatest part of *Oracles*: Which were indeed but Impostures, whereby Men deceived one another with obscure Words that bore a double Sence: In fine, if there were *Oracles*, in which the Devil spoke, the coming of the *Incarnate Truth* condemned the Father of Lies to an eternal Silence. 'Tis however very certain that *Dæmons* were consulted, whenever Men had recourse to Inchantments and Magick, as *Lucan* reports of *Pompey* the Younger, and as the Scripture assures us concerning *Saul*. *I agree that in such a great Treatise, which mentions* Oracles *but by the by (and that without any Design of searching into the depth of the Matter) it is enough to attribute the most part of* Oracles *to the Contrivances and Deceits of Men, and to make a Question whether there were any of them at all, in which* Dæmons *were concerned, and to allow the* Dæmons *no further Imployment than comes within the compass of Incantations and Magick; and, in fine, to prove that* Oracles *ceas'd, not because the Son of God imposed Silence on 'em, all of a sudden, but because the most enlightned Wits were disabused by the Publication of the Gospel: Which still supposes that those Human Artifices*

fices could not be detected in a little time. However in my Opinion a Queſtion decided in ſo few words ought to be treated of a-new, and that in all its natural Extent, without any Man's being offended by the Repetition; for 'tis putting in Great, what the World has hitherto ſeen but only in Little; and ſo in little, that its Objects are ſcarce preceptible.

I know not whether it be permitted me to enlarge my Preface, by making a ſhort Obſervation upon the Stile I ſhall uſe, which is familiar, and after the manner of Converſing: And I imagine that I entertain my Reader ſo much the more pleaſingly, becauſe I muſt, as it were, diſpute with him: And the Matter which I have in Hand, being often capable enough of being turned into Ridicule, engaged me in a Manner of Writing far different from that of Sublime; ſince I am of Opinion that none ought to write loftily, but he that writes in Defence of himſelf, it is ſo little natural. I confeſs, that the low Stile is yet ſomething worſe, but there is a Medium of a very great Latitude; yet 'tis mighty hard to take that Pitch which is neceſſary, and to keep ſteady to it.

THE

THE HISTORY OF ORACLES.

MY Design is not to give you directly an History of *Oracles*; I only intend to argue against that common Opinion which attributes 'em to *Demons*, and will have 'em to ceaſe at the coming of Jeſus Chriſt. In doing this 'tis neceſſary that I run through the whole Hiſtory of *Oracles*, that I unfold their Originals, their Progreſs, the different Manners in which they were deliver'd; and laſtly, their Decay, with the ſame Exactneſs as if I were in theſe Matters purſuing the Natural and Hiſtorical Order.

It is not at all ſurprizing, that Philoſophers ſhou'd have ſo much trouble in finding out the Secrets of Nature, her Principles being ſo hidden that 'tis raſhneſs in Men to think to diſcover 'em. But when we have no more to do, but to enquire whether the *Oracles* were a

Trick and Artifice of the Heathen Priests, or not, and at what time they ceas'd, Where lies the Difficulty? Cannot we that are impos'd on every Day, imagine how far other Men may have been Deceivers, or deceived? But especially when the whole matter turns upon the time when *Oracles* ceas'd, Where can the Difficulty be? There are many Books that treat of *Oracles*; let us see therefore in what time, or in what Age the last *Oracles*, of which we have any knowledge, were deliver'd.

Men are not willing to suffer the Decision of things to be too easie, and therefore they mingle their own Prejudices with Truths, and so create greater Perplexities than are naturally found therein; and those Scruples, which our selves frame, give us the most pain to untangle. And in my Opinion this Business of *Oracles* hath no considerable Difficulty in it, but what we our selves have raised. It is in its own Nature, a matter of Religion amongst the Pagans, and become so without any Necessity amongst Christians, and on both sides it is loaded with Prejudices which obscure the clearest Truths.

I confess that Prejudices are not in themselves common to a true as well as a false Religion; for they reign chiefly in the false, which is only the Contrivance of Humane Wit; but in the true (which is the Production of God alone) there wou'd nõne be ever found, if Humane Wit cou'd be prevented from intermedling and mixing something of its own with it; for all its new Inventions are but Prejudices without ground, and it is not able to add any thing

thing real or solid to the great Work of God. Nevertheless, these Prejudices that are in the true Religion, are, as I may say, so closely interwoven with it, that they have drawn that Respect to themselves which is only due to the true Religion; and we dare not find fault with the One, for fear of attacking at the same time something that is holy in the Other. I do not reproach this Excess of Religion in those that are capable of discerning, but rather praise it; yet whatever Commendations they may deserve, we cannot but confess, that a just *Medium* is much the safest Course; and that it is more reasonable to remove Error from Truth, than to venerate Error because it is mix'd with Truth. Christianity has been always able to stand of its self without false Proofs; but it is at present rendred more so than ever, by the Pains the great Men of this Age have taken to establish it on true Foundations with greater Power and Force than ever the Ancients did; and we ought to be fill'd with so just Confidence of our Religion, as to reject all false Advantages, tho' they may be useful to a weaker Party. Having laid this Foundation, I advance boldly to prove, That *Oracles*, of what nature soever, were not deliver'd by *Daemons*, and that they did not cease at the coming of Jesus Christ. Each of which Points deserves a particular Discourse.

The First Discourse,

That Oracles were not given by Dæmons.

IT is certain, that there are *Dæmons*, evil *Genii*, and Spirits condemn'd to eternal Punishment. Religion teaches us that; and if so, then our Reason must tell us, that these *Dæmons* might have animated Statues, and delivered *Oracles*, if God had permitted them so to do. We are therefore only to inquire whether they had such Permission or not.

'Tis only then a Matter of Fact which is in dispute; and this Matter of Fact depending wholly on the Will of God, it is certain, that it would have been revealed to us, if the knowledge thereof were necessary. But the Holy Scriptures do not teach us any where, that *Oracles* were deliver'd by *Dæmons*; and therefore we are at liberty to chuse which side we will take in this matter; for it is of the number of those things that the Divine Wisdom has thought fit to leave to our own Decision.

Now it is agreed on by the whole World, that there was something supernatural in *Oracles*;

cles; the reason of which is easily found, as to what regards the present Age: For since it was believ'd in the first Ages of Christianity, that *Oracles* were deliver'd by *Dæmons*, this seems a sufficient cause for us to believe it now; for whatever was the Opinion of the Ancients, good or bad, it was always favourably received; and what they themselves cou'd not prove by sufficient Reasons, is in our Days prov'd by their Authority alone. If they foresaw this, they did very well not to give themselves the trouble of reasoning too nicely. But let us inquire after the Reasons which obliged the Primitive Christians to believe, that *Oracles* had something supernatural in 'em; and we shall afterwards try whether they were sound and solid, or not.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

The first Reason why the Primitive Christians believed that Oracles *were delivered by* Dæmons; *and the surprizing Histories that were publish'd concerning* Oracles *and* Genii.

ANtiquity is full of abundance of wonderful Histories and Oracles which, as it is believ'd, must needs be attributed to Spirits. I will relate some few Examples, which shall serve for a Taste of what the rest were:

All the World knows what happen'd to the Pilot *Thamus*: His Ship being one Evening near certain Islands in the *Ægean* Sea, the Winds were hush'd on a sudden, and the Waves ceas'd their motion; all the Passengers were awake, and the greatest part of 'em passing their time in drinking one with another, when on a sudden they heard a Voice, which came from the Islands, and call'd aloud, *Thamus*. *Thamus* suffer'd himself to be call'd thrice before he return'd an Answer, and then the Voice commanded him, that when he did arrive at a certain place, he should cry out, *That the great* Pan *was dead*. There was not a Man in the Ship who was not seiz'd with Fear and Dread at these Words; and they all consulted whether *Thamus* ought obey the Voice

or

or not; but *Thamus* resolv'd that if when they were arrived at the appointed place, there were Wind enough to Sail onwards, he would pass by without saying any thing; but if a Calm happen'd to keep him there, he then would acquit himself of the Order he had receiv'd. And so finding himself to be surpriz'd with a Calm in that very place, he cry'd out with all his force, *That the Great* Pan *was dead.* Scarce had he given over speaking, but they heard from every side Groans and Complaints as of a great Multitude surpriz'd and afflicted at this News. All those who were in the Ship were Witnesses of this Accident; the Fame of which spread it self in a little time, as far as *Rome*; and the Emperor *Tiberius* having a desire to see *Thamus* himself, assembled a great number of Pagan Priests to know of them who this great *Pan* was, and it was concluded, that he was the Son of *Mercury* and *Penelope.* Thus in *Plutarch*'s Dialogues (where he treats of the Cessation of *Oracles*) *Cleombrotus* tells this Story, and says he had it of *Epitherses* his Grammar-master, who was in the Ship with *Thamus* when this Wonder happen'd.

Thulis was a King of *Egypt*, whose Empire extended it self as far as the Ocean: It is he who (as they said) gave the Name of *Thule* to the Isle now called *Iseland.* His Empire reaching thither was of a large Extent, and the King puff'd up with Pride at his Success and Prosperity went to the *Oracle* of *Serapis*, and thus he spake to it: *Thou that art the God of Fire, and who governest the* *Suidas.*

Course of the Heavens, tell me the Truth: Was there ever, or will there ever be one so Puissant as my self?

The *Oracle* answer'd him thus:

First God, then the Word and Spirit, all——uniting in one, whose Power can never end. Go hence immediately, O Mortal, whose Life is always uncertain. And *Thulis* at his going thence had his Throat cut.

Eusebius has collected from the Writings of *Porphyrus* these following *Oracles:*

1. *Groan, ye* Tripodes, Apollo *leaves you; he is forced to leave you by a Celestial Light.* Jupiter *has been, is, and ever will be: Oh, great* Jupiter! *Alas! my famous* Oracles *are no more.*

2. *The Voice can return no more to the Priestess, she is condemn'd to Silence. Make such Sacrifices to* Apollo, *as are worthy of a God.*

3. *Unhappy Priest,* (said *Apollo* to one of his Priests) *interrogate me no more concerning the Holy Father, his only Son, nor the Spirit, which is the Soul of all things: It is this Spirit that chases me for ever from these Abodes.*

Augustus, now grown old, and designing to chuse a Successor, went to consult the *Oracle* of *Delphos*. The *Oracle* returned no Answer, altho' *Augustus* spared no Sacrifice; but in the end he drew from it this following:

Suidas, Nicephorus, Cedrenus.

The Hebrew Infant, to whom all the Gods pay Obedience, chases me hence and sends me into Hell. Therefore quit this Temple, without speaking any more.

It

It is easie to see, that upon the Credit of such like Histories, they ground their Opinion, who say, that *Demons* employed themselves in pronouncing *Oracles*: This great *Pan* (who died in the Reign of *Tiberius*, as well as Jesus Christ), is the Master and Prince of the *Demons*, whose Empire was ruined by the Death of a God so saving to the Universe: Or, if this Explanation do not please you, (for I hope we may without Impiety give different Solutions of the same thing, altho' it be of a religious Concern) this great *Pan* was Jesus Christ himself: Whose Death caused so general a Grief and Consternation among the *Demons*, who from that time could no more exercise their Tyranny over Mankind: Thus a way has been found out to give a double Account who this great *Pan* was.

Could the *Oracle* delivered to King *Thulis* (an *Oracle* so positive concerning the Holy Trinity) be a Humane Fiction? How could the Priest of *Serapis* have divined so great Mystery, unknown then to all the World, and even to the Jews themselves?

If these *Oracles* were delivered by Priests, who were Impostors, what could oblige them to discredit themselves, and publish the Cessation of their own gainful *Oracles*? Is it not visible, that God forced *Demons* to bear Witness to the Truth? Besides, why did the *Oracles* cease, if they were only deliver'd by Priests?

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

The second Reason why the Primitive Christians believed that Oracles *were supernatural; and the Agreement of this Opinion with the System of Christianity.*

THat there are *Daemons* being once allowed by Christianity, it was natural and easie enough to attribute to them the Ability of performing any thing that is Great and Wonderful, and not to refuse them the Power of delivering *Oracles*, and effecting any other Pagan Miracles, which seemed to have need of their Assistance. And thus the Ancients saved themselves the trouble of entring into a strict Enquiry about Matters which would be tedious and difficult: For all that was suprizing and extraordinary, was without any more ado ascribed to these *Daemons*: And this alone they thought a sufficient Confirmation of their Existence, and of the Religion it self that warranted it.

Moreover, It is certain, that about the time of the Birth of Jesus Christ, there is often mention made of the Cessation of *Oracles* even in Prophane Authors. Now, why this time rather than any other, was destinied for the Cessation of them is very easily made out, according to the System of the Christian Religion. God had chosen his People out of the Jewish Nation, and left the Empire of the rest of the World to *Daemons* till the coming of his Son; but

but then, he deprived them of that Power, which before he permitted them to have. His Will then was, that all should submit themselves to Jesus Christ, and that nothing should hinder the Establishment of his Kingdom over all the World. There is such a sort of Happiness in this Thought, that I do not wonder it has made so great a Progress. This is one of those things to the truth of which we easily accord, and which perswaded us, because we are willing to believe it.

CHAP. III.

The third Reason of the Primitive Christians, taken from the Agreement of their Opinion with the Philosophy of Plato.

NEver any Philosophy was so *à-la-mode*, as that of *Plato* during the first Ages of the Church: The Pagans interested themselves amongst all the different Sects of Philosophers, but the Conformity which *Plato*'s was found to have with Religion, made almost all the knowing Christians of that Sect. Thence came the mighty Esteem they had of *Plato*; they looked upon him as a sort of Prophet who had fore-told many important Points of Christianity, especially that of the Holy Trinity; (which we cannot deny to be clearly enough contained in his Writings:) Nay, they went so far as to take his Works for Comments on the Scrip-

Scripture; and to conceive the Nature of the *Word*, as he conceived it. He represented God so elevated above his Creatures, that he did not believe that they were immediately made by his Hands; and therefore he put between them and him this *Word*, as a degree by which the Actions of God might pass down to them: The Christians had the like Idea of Jesus Christ: And this may perhaps be the Reason why no Heresie has been more generally received and maintained with greater Heat than *Arrianism*.

This *Platonism* then (which seems to Honour the Christian Religion by countenancing it) was very full of Notions about *Dæmons*: And thence they easily pass'd into that Opinion which the old Christians had of *Oracles*.

Plato said that *Dæmons* were of a middle Nature, between God and Man; that they were the aerial *Genii* appointed to hold Commerce, between God and us; that altho' they were near us, yet we con'd not see them; that they penetrated into all our Thoughts; that they had a Love for the *Good*, and a Hatred for the *Bad*; and that it was for their Honour that such variety of Sacrifices, and so many different Ceremonies were appointed: But it does not at all appear, that *Plato* acknowledged any evil *Dæmons*, to which might be attributed the management of the Illusions of *Oracles*. *Plutarch*, notwithstanding, assures us, that *Plato* was not ignorant of them; and amongst the *Platonical* Philosophers, the thing is out of doubt. * *Eusebius* in his *Evangelical Preparations*, recites

* *Dialogues of the ceasing of Oracles*, Lib. 4, 5, 6.

cites a great number of Passages out of *Porphyrius*, where the Pagan Philosopher assures us, that evil *Damons* are the Authors of Enchantments, Philtres and Witch-crafts; that they cheat our Eyes with Spectres, Fantoms and Apparitions; that Lying is essential to their Nature; that they raise in us the greatest part of our Passions; and that they have an Ambition to pass with us for Gods; that their aerial and spiritual Bodies are nourished with Suffumigations, and with the Blood and Fat of Sacrifices; and that 'tis only these that imploy themselves in giving *Oracles*, and to whom this Task so full of Fraud is assign'd: In short, at the Head of this Troop of evil *Damons* he places *Hecate* and *Serapis*.

Jamblichus, another *Platonist*, has said as much. And the greatest part of these things being true, the Christians received them all with Joy, and have added to them besides a little of their own; As for example, That the *Damons* stole from the Writings of the Prophets some Knowledge of things to come; and so got Honour by it in their *Oracles*. Tertullian in his Apologies.

This System of the ancient Christians had this Advantage, that it discovered to the Pagans by their own Principles, the Original of their false Worship, and the Source of those Errors which they always embraced. They were perswaded that there was something supernatural in their *Oracles*; and the Christians, who were always disputing against them, did not desire to confute this Opinion. Thus by *Damons* (which both Parties believed to be con-

concerned in the *Oracles*,) they explicated all that was supernatural in them. They acknowledged indeed that this sort of ordinary Miracles were wrought in the Pagan Religion; but then they ruined this Advantage again, by imputing them to such Authors as evil Spirits. And this way of convincing, was more short and easie, than to contradict the Miracle itself, by a long Train of Enquiries and Arguments. Thus I have given you the manner how that Opinion which the first Ages of the Church had of the Pagan *Oracles*, was grounded; I might to the three Reasons, which I have already brought, add a fourth of no less Authority perhaps than those; that is, That in the Supposition of *Oracles* being given by *Dæmons*, there is something miraculous: And if we consider the Humour of Mankind a little, we shall find how much we are taken with any thing that is miraculous. But I do not intend to enlarge my self on this Reflection; for those that think upon it, will easily believe me, and those that do not, will perhaps give it no Credit, notwithstanding all my Arguments.

Let us now examine the several Reasons which Men have had to believe *Oracles* to be supernatural.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

That the surprizing Histories of Oracles *ought to be suspected.*

IT is very difficult to give an Account of those Stories and *Oracles* which we have mentioned, without having Recourse to *Demons*. But the Question is, Whether they be true? Let us be assured of the Matter of Fact, before we trouble ourselves with enquiring into the Cause. It is true, that this Method is too slow and dull for the greatest part of Mankind, who run naturally to the Cause, and pass over the Truth of the Matter of Fact; but for my part, I will not be so ridiculous as to find out a Cause for what is not.

This kind of Misfortune happened so pleasantly at the end of the last Age, to some learned *Germans*, that I cannot forbear speaking of it: "In the Year 1593, there was a "Report, that the Teeth of a Child of *Silesia* of seven Years old, dropp'd out, and "that one of Gold came in the Place of one "of his great Teeth. *Horstius*, a Physician "in the University of *Helmstad*, wrote, in "the Year 1595, the History of this Tooth, "and pretends that it was partly natural, and "partly miraculous, and that it was sent from "God to this Infant, to comfort the Chri-"stians who were then afflicted by the Turks.

Now fansie to your self what a Consolation this was, and what this Tooth could signifie, either

either to the Christians or the Turks. In the same Year (that this Tooth might not want for Historians) one *Rolandus* wrote a Book of it; Two Years after, *Ingolstetterus*, another learned Man, wrote against the Opinion of *Rolandus* concerning this Golden Tooth; and *Rolandus* presently makes a learned Reply. Another great Man, named *Libavius*, collected all that had been said of this Tooth, to which he added his own Opinion. In fine their wanted nothing to so many famous Works, but only the Truth of its being a Golden Tooth. For when a Gold-smith had examined it, he found, that it was only a thin Plate of Gold fix'd to the Tooth with a great deal of Art. Thus they first went about to compile Books, and afterwards they consulted the Gold-smith.

Nothing is more natural than to do the same thing in all other cases. And I am not so convinc'd of our Ignorance by the things that are, and of which the Reasons are unknown, as by those which are not, and for which we yet find out Reasons. That is to say, as we want those Principles that lead us to Truth, so we have those which agree exceeding well with Error and Falsehood.

Some learned Physicians have found out the reason why places under Ground are hot in the Winter and cool in the Summer; and greater Physicians have since discover'd that they are not so.

Historical Enquiries are much more liable to this Error: For when we argue from what is said in History, what Assurances have we that these Historians have never been byassed, nor

nor credulous, nor misinform'd, nor negligent? 'Tis necessary therefore that we should look out for one, that has been an Eye-witness of all those things of which he writes, unconcern'd by Interest, and diligent: But especially when Men write of such Matters of Fact, as have a relation to Religion, it is very hard not to favour (according to the Party of which they are) a false Religion with those Advantages that are not due to it; or not to give a true one those false Assistances of which it has no need; And yet we may be assured that we can never add more Truth to what is true already, nor make that true which is false.

Some Christians in the first Age, for want of having been convinced of this Maxim, have suffer'd themselves, in favour of Christianity, to introduce Suppositions bold enough, which the sounder part of Christians have been fain afterwards to disown. This inconsiderate Zeal has produc'd a great number of Apocryphal Books, to which were given the Names of Pagan or Jewish Authors; for the Church, having to do with these two sorts of Enemies, what was more advantageous to her than to fight 'em with their own Weapons, by producing Books, which, tho' made as was pretended, by their own Party, were written nevertheless very much in favour of Christianity? But whilst they strained the Point too far, to draw from those Counterfeit Works some very great Benefit to their Religion, they gained none at all; for the Clearness of the manner in which they were written, betray'd them; and our Mysteries are therein so plainly unfold-

ed, that the Prophets of the Old and New Teſtament underſtood nothing in compariſon of thoſe Jewiſh and Pagan Authors. And which way ſoever Men turn themſelves to ſave the Reputation of thoſe Books, they will find in their too great Clearneſs a Difficulty not to be ſurmounted. If ſome Chriſtians fathered ſpurious Books on Pagans and Jews, Hereticks found the way of doing the like on the Orthodox. There was nothing to be met with but falſe Goſpels, falſe Epiſtles of the Apoſtles, and falſe Hiſtories of their Lives; and nothing but an Effect of the Divine Providence could have ſeparated the Truth from ſo many Apocryphal Works, as confounded it.

Some great Men of the Church have ſometimes been deceived either by the ſpurious Works of Hereticks farthered upon the Orthodox, or by what the Chriſtians father upon the Jews; but oftenеſt by the latter. For they ſeldom examine ſtrictly enough that which ſeems favourable to Religion; the Heat with which they conteſt for ſo good a Cauſe, not giving them the leiſure to make a good Choice of their Weapons. This is the reaſon that they have hapned ſometimes to make uſe of the Books of the *Sibyls*, or of thoſe of *Hermes Triſmegiſtus*, King of *Egypt*.

We do not intend by this to weaken the Authority, or to leſſen the Merit of thoſe great Men. For after we ſhall have examin'd all the Errors, (into which perhaps they have fallen on ſome certain Subjects,) there will yet remain abundance of ſolid Reaſonings, and very curious Diſcoveries, which are worthy of our higheſt

higheſt Admiration. And if, with the true Proofs of our Religion, they have left us others which may be ſuſpected, it is our part to receive that only which is legitimate; and to pardon their Zeal, who have furniſh'd us with more Proofs than there was any neceſſity for.

I am not at all ſurpriz'd that this ſame Zeal has convinced 'em of the truth of I know not how many *Oracles*, advantageous to their Religion, which paſſed for currant in the firſt Ages of the Church. The Authors of the Books of the *Sibyls*, and thoſe of *Hermes Triſmegiſtus*, were alſo probably the Authors of theſe *Oracles*; at leſt it was more eaſie to feign them, than to counterfeit intire Volumes. The Hiſtory of *Thamus* is originally Heathen, and yet *Euſebius* and other great Authors have given it the Reputation of being believ'd. It is immediately followed in *Plutarch* with a Relation ſo ridiculous, that it will be ſufficient wholly to diſcredit the other: For *Demetrius* ſays there, that the moſt part of the Iſlands near *England* are deſert, and conſecrated to *Damons* and Heroes; and that he, being ſent by the Emperor to diſcover theſe Iſlands, chanced to land upon one of thoſe that were peopled, and that, a little time after his arrival, there happen'd a Tempeſt and terrible Claps of Thunder and Lightning, which made the People of the Country conclude that ſome one of their Principal *Damons* was dead; becauſe their Deaths were always attended with ſomething ſtrange and horrible. To this *Demetrius* adds, That one of thoſe Iſlands was the Priſon of *Saturn*, who was kept there by *Briareus*, and was buri-

ed in a profound Sleep (which methinks should render the Custody of the Giant very needless) incompass'd with an infinite number of *Dæmons* lying at his feet as Slaves.

Has not *Demetrius* made a very curious Relation of this Voyage? And is it not pleasant to see such a Philosopher as *Plutarch* coldly relate to us such wonderful things? It is not without reason that *Herodotus* is esteemed the Father of History; and all the Greek Writers of that kind are on that account his Off-spring, and partake of his Genius. They have somewhat of Truth, but more of wonderful and amusing Stories. But let it be how it will, it were sufficient almost to refute the History of *Thamus* (tho' it had no other Defect) to have been found in the same Treatise with the *Dæmons* of *Demetrius*.

But besides this, it cannot receive a reasonable Interpretation. For if the great God *Pan* were a *Dæmon*, could not the *Dæmons* have sent one another an Account of one of their Deaths, without employing *Thamus* to that end? Have they no other way of informing one another of News? And, on the other side, can they be so imprudent as to discover to Men their Misfortunes, and the Weakness of their Natures? God compell'd 'em, perhaps, you will say. Then God had some design in doing so: But let us see what follow'd thereupon; there was no Person that was converted from Paganism by having heard of the Death of the great God *Pan*. It was declared that he was the Son of *Mercury* and *Penelope*, and that it was not he that was acknowledg'd in *Arcadia* for Supream God

God of all (as his Name imports) and therefore tho' the Voice had named him the Great *Pan*, yet he was understood to be but the Little *Pan*, whose Death was of no great Consequence, and there did not appear any considerable Regret for it.

If this great *Pan* were Jesus Christ, the *Demons* would not have told to Men News of a Death so much to their Advantage, unless God had compell'd them to it. But what's the Effect of all this? Did any one understand the Name of *Pan*, in its true Sence? *Plutarch* liv'd in the second Age of the Church, and yet no Person then knew that *Pan* was Jesus Christ, who died in *Judea*.

The History of *Thulis* is related by *Suidas* (an Author who heaps up a great many things, perhaps ill enough chosen) his *Oracle* of *Serapis* is reproach'd with the same Fault, as the Books of the *Sibyls*; that is, of being too clear concerning our Mysteries. And farther, we are certain that this *Thulis*, King of *Egypt* was not one of the *Ptolomies*; and what then will become of the whole *Oracle*, if *Serapis* were a God first brought into *Egypt* by a *Ptolomy*, who sent for him out of *Pontus*, as many learned Men pretend from very strange Probabilities? At least it is certain that *Herodotus*, who has written so plentifully about old *Egypt*, does not mention *Serapis*, and that *Tacitus* recounts at length how, and why one of the *Ptolomies* brought from *Pontus* the God *Serapis*, that was then known no where else.

The *Oracle*, said to be given to *Augustus* con-

cerning the Hebrew Child, is by no means to be receiv'd. *Cedrenus* cites *Eusebius* for it; but at this day there is no such thing to be found there. It is not impossible that *Cedrenus* should make a false Citation, or should cite some Work not rightly attributed to *Eusebius*: He has thought fit to relate, upon the Credit of certain counterfeit Histories of St. *Peter*, which pass'd for currant in his time, That *Simon* the *Magician* had at his Door a great Dog, which devour'd all those that his Master would not have enter; and that St. *Peter* coming thither to speak with *Simon*, commanded the Dog to go and tell his Master in Humane Language, That *Peter*, the Servant of God, would speak with him: The Dog went and performed that Command, to the great Amazement of such as were then with *Simon*. But *Simon*, to shew that he could do as much as St. *Peter*, bid the Dog go and tell him, That he might enter: which the Dog immediately did. Hence you may see what it is that the Greeks call Writing of History. *Cedrenus* lived in an ignorant Age, when the Liberty of writing Fables was joyned with the general Inclination of the Greeks towards 'em.

But tho' *Eusebius*, in some Work of his, which has not come down to us, had effectually spoke of the *Oracle* of *Augustus*, yet we find *Eusebius* himself is sometimes deceived; of which there are good Proofs. The first Defenders of Christianity, *Justin*, *Tertullian*, *Theophilus*, *Tatian*, would they have said nothing of an *Oracle* so much in Favour of their Religion?

gion? Had they so little Zeal as to neglect a thing of such Advantage? but even * those that give us this *Oracle*, spoil it by adding, That *Augustus* in his Return to *Rome*, built in the Capitol an Altar with this Inscription, *This is the Altar of the only Son (or Eldest Son) of God.* Where had he the Idea of this only Son of God, of which the *Oracle* makes no mention? In short, that which is most observable, is, that *Augustus* after the Voyage he made into *Greece*, nineteen Years before the Birth of Jesus Christ, never returned to *Rome*; but allowing that he did, he was not then in an Humour to erect Altars to any God but himself: For he suffered not only the * *Asian* Maids to raise Altars to him, and celebrate Holy Games in his Honour; but also at *Rome* the consecrated one to *Fortune returning*, *Fortuna reduci*; that was to say, to himself, and they were to keep the Day of his happy Return as a Festival.

* *Credemus, Suidæ, Nicephi.*

* *Tacitus, Dion-Cassius.*

The *Oracles* which *Eusebius* relates out of *Porphyrius*, appear harder to make out than all the rest; for *Eusebius* would not have charged *Porphyrius* with *Oracles* of which he made no mention, and *Porphyrius*, who was so addicted to Paganism, would not have cited false *Oracles* (concerning the Cessation of *Oracles* themselves) to the Advantage of the Christian Religion: For in this Case, it seems, that the Testimony of an Enemy has a great deal of Credit and Force.

But on the other side, *Porphyrius* was not so unskilful a Man, as to furnish the Christians with Weapons against Paganism, without being necessarily engaged to it by the consequence

of ſome Reaſons, which does not in this matter appear to be his Caſe. If theſe *Oracles* had been alledged by the Chriſtians, and *Porphyrius* owning that they were effectually given, had denied the Conſequences drawn from them, it is certain that they would have then been much to be relied on.

But it is out of *Porphyrius* himſelf that the Chriſtians (as it appears by the Example of *Euſebius*) pretend to fetch theſe *Oracles*; it ſeems, that *Porphyrius* takes Pleaſure to ruine his own Religion, and to eſtabliſh another. The Truth is, this is ſuſpicious of it ſelf, and yet it becomes more ſo, by his puſhing the thing ſo far; for they tell us from him of I know not how many *Oracles* moſt clear and moſt poſitive, concerning the Perſon of Jeſus Chriſt, concerning his Reſurrection and Aſcenſion. In fine, the moſt reſolute, and knowing amongſt the Pagans hath loaded us with Proofs of Chriſtianity; we may well ſuſpect ſo great a Piece of Generoſity.

Euſebius believed it a very great Advantage to be able to place *Porphyrius* at the Head of a Multitude of *Oracles* ſo favourable to Religon; and he gives them us ſtripp'd of whatever accompanies them, in the Writings of *Porphyrius*. How do we know, but that he did refute them? According to the Intereſt of his Cauſe, he ought to have done it; and if he did not do it, certainly he had ſome hidden Intention.

It is to be ſuſpected, that *Porphyrius* was wicked enough to frame falſe *Oracles*, and preſent them to Chriſtians, with a deſign of making

king Sport with their Credulity, if they ſhould receive them for true, and endeavour to ſtrengthen their Religion by ſuch like Props: And then he would have drawn thence ſuch Conſequences as would be of greater Importance than theſe *Oracles*, and with this Inſtance have attacked the whole Religion. However, at the bottom this would have been but a frivolous Argument.

'Tis very certain, that this ſame *Porphyrius* (who furniſheth us with all theſe *Oracles*) held, (as we have ſeen) that they were delivered by lying Spirits; it may very well then be imagined, that he hath put into *Oracles* all the Myſteries of our Religion, endeavouring to deſtroy it by rendring it ſuſpected of Forgery, as depending on the Teſtimony of falſe Witneſſes: I know the Chriſtians did not take it ſo; yet ſeeing they could never prove by any Argument, that the *Dæmons* were ſometimes forced to ſpeak the Truth, *Porphyrius* was always in a condition to make uſe of his *Oracles* again them. And therefore (if we take the Matter right) their better way had been to have denied, that there were ever any *Oracles*, as we do at this preſent. This appears to me to be a ſufficient Reaſon, why *Porphyrius* was ſo prodigal of *Oracles*, that were ſo favourable to our Religion. But what would have been the Succeſs of the great Debate between the Chriſtians and Infidels, we can only conjecture; for all the written Pieces of their Diſputes are not come to our Hands. Thus in examining things a little cloſer than ordinary, we find that the *Oracles*, which were reckoned

ſuch

such Wonders, never were at all; of which, I shall not need to give any more Instances, all the rest being of the same Nature.

Chap. V.

That the common Opinion concerning Oracles *does not agree so well as 'tis imagin'd with the Christian Religion.*

THe silence of the Scriptures concerning these evil *Demons*, (which are pretended to be the Managers of *Oracles*) hath not only left us at liberty to believe nothing of 'em, but it obliges us to believe the contrary; for can it be possible that the Scriptures should not have instructed the Jews and Christians in a thing which it so extremely imported them to know, (and which they cou'd never have found out by their natural Reason) to the end that they might not be shaken in their own Religion, by seeing things so surprising in another. For I conceive that God spake not to Man, but to supply the weakness of his Understanding, which of it self was not sufficient to guide him; and that whatsoever he has not declar'd to him, is either of such a nature that he may learn it by himself, or else God does not think it necessary that he should know it. So if the *Oracles* had been deliver'd by evil *Demons*, God would have made it known to us, to have prevented us from believing that he himself deliver'd 'em, or that there was something Divine in false Religions. *Da-*

David reproached the Infidels with Gods that had Mouths and ſpake not, and wiſhes that their Adorers, for a Puniſhment, might become like thoſe they ador'd; but if theſe Gods had not only the uſe of Speech, but alſo the Knowledge of Things to come, I ſee no reaſon *David* had thus to reproach the Infidels; nor ought they to have been angry for having been reſembled to their Gods. When the Holy Fathers inveighed with ſo much reaſon againſt the Worſhip of Idols, they always argu'd from the Impotency of 'em; but if they had ſpoken, if they had predicted things to come, then they ought not to have treated them with ſuch Contempt on the account of their Impotency, but ſhould rather have diſabus'd the People, and have confeſs'd the wondrous Power that was in 'em: In fine, could they be ſo mightily miſtaken who ador'd what they believed was animated by a Divine Virtue, or at leaſt a Vertue more than Humane? 'Tis true, you'll ſay, that theſe *Demons* were Enemies of God; but how cou'd the Heathens Divine that? Becauſe *Demons* required Ceremonies that were barbarous and extravagant; the Pagans themſelves believ'd 'em fantaſtical and cruel, but nevertheleſs they believ'd 'em more powerful than Men; nor did they know that the true God offer'd 'em his Protection againſt them. They did for the moſt part ſubmit themſelves to their Gods as to dreaded Enemies who were to be appeaſed at any Price; nor had this Submiſſion and Fear been quite without Reaſon, if ſo be that in effect *Demons* did give ſome proof of their Power over Nature.

ture. In fine, Paganism (tho' a Worship abominable in the sight of God) would have been but an involuntary and excusable Error.

But you will say, if the crafty Priests made it their Business to impose upon the People, then Paganism was no more but a simple Error into which the Credulous fell, whilst their honest and downright Intention was to Honour a Superiour Being.

But the Case is much otherwise; for it behoves Men to Precaution themselves against Errors, into which other Men may lead 'em; but there is no possibility of fore-arming themselves against those Errors into which they may be led by *Genii* or *Dæmons*, which are above themselves. The light of my Reason is sufficient to examine whether a Statue speaks or does not, but in the moment that it does speak, nothing can perswade me against the Divinity which I attribute to it. In a word, God is oblig'd by the Laws of his Bounty to protect me from those Surprizes from which I cannot defend my self; but as for other things, it belongs to my Reason to do its Office.

We see also that when God permitted the *Dæmons* to work Prodigies, he at the same time confounded them by working Miracles far greater. *Pharaoh* might be deceived by the Magicians, but *Moses* was still more powerful than the Magicians of *Pharaoh*. The *Dæmons* never had more power, or did more surprizing things, than in the time of Jesus Christ and the Apostles. This hinders not, but that Paganism with Justice hath been always called the Worship of *Dæmons*. For in the first place, the

the Idea which is taken therein of the Divinity, does not at all agree with the true God, but with the Reprobate and eternally unhappy *Genii*.

Secondly, The Design of the Heathens was not so much to adore the first Being, which is the Source of all Good, but those ill Beings of whose Anger and Caprice they stood in fear. In fine, the *Dæmons*, (who have without Contradiction the power of tempting Men and laying Snares for 'em) countenanced as much as ever they could the gross Errors of the Pagans, and made 'em blind to Impostures, which were notoriously visible. From hence it is said that Paganism was not born up by the Miracles, but by the Artifices of *Dæmons*; which supposes that in whatever they did there was nothing of reality or truth, nor of such force as effectually to make a Statue speak.

Nevertheless, it may be that God has sometimes permitted the *Dæmons* to animate Idols; but if this ever happen'd, God had his peculiar Reasons for it, which are always worthy of profound Veneration; but, generally speaking, there has never been any such thing. God permitted the Devil to burn the Houses of *Job*, and lay his Pastures desolate; to cause all his Oxen and Sheep to die; to strike his Body with a thousand Wounds; but it must not therefore be said that the Devil is let loose on all those to whom such Misfortunes happen. When there is a Discourse about any Man's being sick, or ruin'd, we never think that the Devil is concern'd in it. The Case of *Job* is a particular Case; we argue independantly of it,

it, and our general Reasoning never excludes the Exceptions that the Almighty Power of God can make in all things.

'Tis apparent then that the common Opinion concerning *Oracles*, does not very well agree with the Bounty of God, and that it discharges Paganism of the greatest part of the Extravagances and Abominations which the Holy Fathers always found in it. The Pagans might have said in their own Justification, That it was no Wonder, that they should obey those which animated Statues, and performed every Day a thousand extraordinary things; and therefore the Christians to take from them all Excuse, ought never to have yielded 'em this Point. If all the Pagan Religion were no other than the Cheats of Priests, Christians took advantage of the Excess of Ridiculousness into which the Pagans fell.

Besides, is there any great appearance that the Disputes between the Christians and Pagans was in that State, seeing *Porphyrius* confesses with so much Willingness, that the *Oracles* were delivered by evil *Dæmons?* Of these evil *Dæmans* he made a double use: He made use of 'em (as we have already seen) to render those *Oracles* unprofitable and disadvantageous to the Christian Religion, which the Christians thought were on their side; and besides he imputed all the Follies and Barbarities of an infinite number of Sacrifices, which without ceasing they reproach'd the Pagans withal, to these cunning and cruel *Genii*. We then attack *Porphyrius* even in his last Retrenchments, and assert the true Interest of Christianity, by under-

undertaking to prove that *Dæmons* were not the Authors of *Oracles*.

CHAP. VI.

That Dæmons *are not ſufficiently eſtabliſh'd by* Platoniſm.

IN the firſt Ages, Poetry and Philoſophy were the ſame thing, and all Wiſdom was contained in Verſe. Nor was Poetry more credited by this Alliance, but Philoſophy was leſs. *Homer* and *Heſiod* were the firſt Grecian Philoſophers; and thence it is that all other Philoſophers have had in very great Eſtimation whatever they ſaid, and have never cited them but with great Honour.

Homer very often confounds together the Gods and *Dæmons*: But *Heſiod* diſtinguiſhes four Species or Kinds of reaſonable Natures, viz. the *Gods*, *Dæmons*, the *Demy-Gods*, or *Heroes*, and *Men*. Nay, he goes farther yet, and notes the Duration of the Lives of *Dæmons*: For the Nymphs, of which he ſpeaks in the place I am going to cite, are theſe *Dæmons*, and *Plutarch* underſtands them ſo.

A Crow, (ſays *Heſiod*) *lives nine times as long as a Man, a Stag four times as long as a Crow, a Raven three times as long as a Stag, the Phœnix nine times as long as a Raven; and in fine, the Nymphs ten times as long as the Phœnix.* One would take this Calculation for no other than a meer Poetick Fancy, unworthy the Reflecti-

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ons of a Philoſopher, or the Imitation of a Poet; for there is in it neither Agreeableneſs nor Truth. But *Plutarch* is not of this Opinion; for he finds, that ſuppoſing the Life of Man to be ſeventy Years, (which is his ordinary Duration,) the *Dæmons* then ought to live ſix hundred and eighty thouſand, and four hundred Years: And not conceiving how any Experiment of this ſo long Life of the *Dæmons* can be made, he rather believes that *Heſiod* by the Age of Man, underſtands but one Year. The Interpretation is not very natural; but according to this Eſtimation, the Life of the *Dæmons* is not above nine thouſand ſeven hundred and twenty Years, and then *Plutarch* had not much trouble to find out how *Dæmons* could live ſo long. And beſides, he remarks in the number of nine thouſand ſeven hundred and twenty Years, certain *Pythagorean* Perfections, which render it altogether worthy to deſign the Term of the Lives of *Dæmons*. Such as theſe are the boaſted Reaſonings of Antiquity.

From the Poems of *Homer* and *Heſiod*, the *Dæmons* paſſed into the Phyloſophy of *Plato*, who can never be too much commended, ſince 'tis he, of all the Greeks, who has conceived the higheſt Idea of God; tho' even that plunged him in falſe Notions: For, becauſe God is infinitely elevated above Men, he believed that there ought to be placed between him and us, a kind of middle Beings, which ſhould cauſe a Communication of two Extremes ſo far diſtant, by the means of which, the Operations of the Deity might be brought down to us; *God* (ſays he) *reſembles a Triangle, which has three*

three Sides equal; the Dæmons *are like a Triangle that has but two Sides equal, and Men are like a Triangle which has all three Sides unequal.*

This Idea is well enough fansied, and there is nothing wanting but something of Solidity to support it.

But after all (may it be said) has not *Plato* reasoned justly? And do not we know for certain by the Holy Scriptures, that there are *Genii*, Ministers of the Will of God, and his Messengers to Men? Is it not wonderful that *Plato* should discover this, only by the Light of his Natural Reason?

I confess, that *Plato* has conjectured aright; nevertheless, I blame him for his Conjecture. Divine Revelation assures us of the Existence of Angels and *Dæmons*, but it is not within the Sphere of Humane Reason to assure us of it. He knows not what to make of the infinite Space which is between God and Man, and therefore he fills it with *Genii* and *Dæmons*: But with what shall that infinite Space be fill'd, which is between God and these *Genii* or *Dæmons* themselves? For the Distance between God and any Creature whatsoever, is infinite. And if the Actions and Will of God must traverse, as one may say, this infinite *Vacuum* to go to the *Dæmons*, they may as well reach even to Men, since they are farther off but by very few Degrees, which bear no Proportion to the first great Distance. When God treats with Men by the Ministry of Angels, 'tis not no be understood that Angels are necessary for this Communication (as *Plato* pretends;) God employs them for Reasons, into which Philoso-

phy can never penetrate, and which can never be perfectly known but by himself.

According to that Idea, which the Comparison of the Triangle gives us, we find that *Plato* framed this Notion of *Dæmons*, to the end we might mount from one Creature to another Creature more perfect, till at length we arriv'd at God himself. So that God would have but some degrees of Perfection more than the highest Creature; but it is visible, that as they are all infinitely Imperfect in respect of him, because they are all infinitely distant from him; so the Differences of Perfection, which are between the Creatures, vanish as soon as they are compared with God; for what elevates them one above another does not at all bear any Proportion to him.

And if we consult nothing but Human Reason, there is no need of Spirits to make the Actions of God communicable to Men, nor of placing between God and us any thing that approaches him, nearer than we do.

And perhaps *Plato* himself was not so sure of the Existence of his *Dæmons*, as the Platonists have since been. That which makes me suspect this, is, That he places Love in the number of the *Dæmons*, (for he often mixes Gallantry with Philosophy, and his Talent is not mean on Subjects of that Nature.) He says, That Love is the Son of the God of Riches, and the Goddess of Poverty: From his Father he holds his Greatness of Courage, his Elevation of Thought, his Inclination to give, his Prodigality and his Confidence in his Strength, his good Opinon of his own Merit, and Desire

to

to have always the Preference. But, on the other ſide, he holds from his Mother that Indigence, which makes him always asking, that Importunity with which he asks, that Timidity and Baſhfulneſs, which hinders him often times from daring to ask, that Diſpoſition which he has to Servitude, and that Fear of being deſpiſed, which he can never loſe. This, in my Opinion, is one of the prettieſt Fables that was ever made. It is pleaſant to find *Plato* ſometimes writing Amours as ſoft and agreeable as *Anacreon* could himſelf have done. This Deſcription of the Pedegree of Love extremely well ſets forth all the Fantaſticalneſs of his Nature: But we know not what to make of *Demons*, if Love muſt paſs for one.

There is no appearance that *Plato* underſtood this in a Natural and Philoſophical Sence, nor that he could ſay, Love was a Being out of us, or extrinſecal, which inhabits the Air: Certainly, he means this only as a Gallantry, and then it muſt be permitted me to believe, that all his *Demons* are of the ſame kind with Love. And that, ſince he mingles Fables with his Syſtem, he cares not much, if the reſt of his Syſtem paſs for a Fable. Hitherto we have only anſwered the Reaſons, that made Men believe *Oracles*, to have had ſomething in them of Supernatural. Let us now begin more cloſely to attack this Opinion.

CHAP. VII.

That some grand Sects of the Pagan Philosophers, did not believe there was any thing Supernatural in Oracles.

IF in the midst of *Greece* it self, where all places resounded with their *Oracles*, we had maintained, that they were but Impostures, no one would have been astonished with the Boldness of the Paradox; and there would have been no need of taking any Measures, how to vend the Opinion in secret. For Philosophers were divided about the Subject of *Oracles*; the Platonists and Stoicks were for them, but the Cynicks, Peripateticks and Epicureans declared highly against them. The Wonders of the *Oracles* were not so great, but that half the wise Men of *Greece* were still at liberty to believe nothing of them; and this, notwithstanding the common Prejudices or Bigotry of the Grecians: Which is a very remarkable thing.

* *Eusebius* tells us of six hundred Heathen Authors who have writ against the *Oracles:* But of all these, in my Opinion, *Oenomaus*, (of whom he makes mention, and of whom he has preserved some Fragments) is one, the Loss of whose Works are to be the most lamented. There is a great deal of Pleasure to be found in those Fragments of his that remain where *Oenomaus*, full of his Cynical Liberty, argues upon every *Oracle* against the God who delivered it, and draws up an Accusation against him.

* Lib. 4. *of his Evang. Preparations.*

him. See how he treats the God of *Delphos*, who in his Answer to *Cræsus* had pronounced these Words:

Crœsus, *in passing the River* Halis, *shall destroy a great Empire.*

Which fell out accordingly; for *Cræsus* passing the River *Halis* attack'd *Cyrus*, who (as all the World knows) came thundring upon him, and divested him of his Kingdoms.

You boast, (says *Oenomaus* to *Apollo*) *in another* Oracle *delivered to* Crœsus, *that you know the Number of the Grains of the Sea-sand; and I suppose, you set a great Value upon your self, because you saw from* Delphos, *the Tortoise that* Crœsus *ordered to be boiled in* Lydia, *at that very instant; this is a precious Knowledge to be proud of! But when you were consulted, concerning the Success of the War between* Crœsus *and* Cyrus, *there you were at a stand. If you can divine what shall happen in time to come, to what purpose do you make use of a manner speaking which cannot be understood? Do you not foresee your self, that they will not be understood? If you do foresee it, you then take pleasure to make us your Sport; if you do not know it, let us inform you, that you ought to speak more clearly, and that you are not understood. I tell you also, if you have a mind to use an Equivocation, that the Greek words by which you express, That* Crœsus *shall destroy a great Empire, are not well chosen, and that they can signifie nothing else but a Victory of* Crœsus *over* Cyrus. *If there be a necessity that things must happen, wherefore dost thou amuse us with thy Ambiguities? What dost thou do at* Delphos, *(unhappily employ'd as thou art) to sing us useless Prophecies? to what purpose do we*

make thee so many Sacrifices? what Fury possesses us?

But *Oenomaus* is yet more out of humour with the *Oracle*, which *Apollo* deliver'd to the Athenians. When *Xerxes* fell upon *Greece* with all the Forces of *Asia*, the Pythian *Oracle* gave 'em for answer,

"That *Minerva*, Protectress of *Athens*, endeavour'd all manner of ways (but in vain) "to appease the Anger of *Jupiter*; but nevertheless *Jupiter*, in favour of his Daughter, "consented to suffer the Athenians to save "themselves in Walls of Wood; and that "*Salamine* shou'd see the Destruction of many "Children dear to their Mothers; either when "*Ceres* shou'd be scattered abroad, or when "she should be gathered in.

Upon this *Oenomaus* wholly loses his Respect for the God of *Delphos:*

This Combat between the Father and the Daughter, says he, *is very unhandsom for Gods. 'Tis very pretty there should be in Heaven such contrary Interests and Inclinations!* Jupiter *is angry with* Athens, *he brings down all the Forces of* Asia *against it; but if he could not have ruin'd it without 'em, if he had no more Thunder left, if he was reduc'd to borrow foreign Forces, how had he it then in his Power to make all the Forces of* Asia *come down against this Town? Yet after this he suffers 'em to save themselves in Walls of Wood; on whom then was his Anger to fall? What, on the Stones! Rare Diviner! You know not whom these Children shall be that* Salamine *shall see the destruction of, whether Greeks or Persians; it cannot be avoided but they must be either one or t'other Army; And do not you*

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at least know, that we shall soon see you know nothing? You conceal the time of Battel under these Poetical Expressions, When *Ceres* shall be scatter'd, or when she shall be gather'd in. *You are willing to blind us with this pompous Language; but does not every body know, that a Naval Battel is never fought but either in Seed-time or Harvest; doubtless it will not be in Winter. But let what will happen, you will get your self off by the means of this* Jupiter, *whom* Minerva *endeavours to appease; if the Grecians lose the Battel,* Jupiter *is then inexorable; if they gain it, then* Jupiter *suffer'd himself to be appeas'd. And* (Apollo) *when you say, let 'em fly to Walls of Wood, you Counsel, you do not Divine. I, who know not what Divining is, cou'd have said as much as this, and cou'd have judg'd as well, that the Fury of the War wou'd fall upon* Athens; *and that since the Athenians had Ships, the best thing they cou'd do, was to abandon the Town and betake themselves to the Sea.*

Such was the Veneration that some great Sects of the Philosophers had for *Oracles*, and for those very Gods they thought the Authors of 'em. 'Tis very pleasant, that all the Pagan Religion was no more than this one Problem of Philosophy, it is necessary to know whether the Gods take care of Men, or not, before the Question can be answered, Whether we ought to adore 'em, or neglect 'em; the People have already decided it, and are for Adoration, and nothing is to be seen but Temples and Sacrifices; but great Sects of the Philosophers maintain publickly, that these Sacrifices, these Temples, these Adorations, are as so many fruitless and unprofitable things;

and that the Gods are so far from delighting in 'em, that they take no cognizance of 'em. There is scarce a Greek who does not consult the *Oracles* concerning his Affairs; but this does not prevent their being treated in three great Schools of Philosophy, as absolute Impostures.

Let me beg leave to carry this Reflection a little farther, which may serve to lay more open the Pagan Religion: The Grecians in general had a great deal of Wit, but they were very light, curious, unquiet, and uncapable of Moderation in any thing; and, to tell my whole Opinion of 'em, they had so much Wit, that their Reason suffer'd by it. The Romans had quite another Character; they were solid, serious, and industrious, they knew how to pursue a Design, and could foresee at a great distance the Consequences of it. I should not be surpris'd that the Grecians (without thinking of the result of things) shou'd impertinently treat *pro* and *con* of every thing; and at the same time that they are making Sacrifices, dispute whether or no these Sacrifices approach the Gods; and consult *Oracles* without being assur'd whether they are meer Illusions or not. Doubtless the Philosophers concern'd themselves so little in the Government, that they took no care not to shock Religion in their Disputes; and perhaps the People had not Faith enough in the Philosophers to abandon their Religion, or change any thing in it upon their word. In fine, the predominant Passion in the Greeks was to discourse on all Matters at any rate; yet doubtless it is more

astonish-

aſtoniſhing to find that the Romans, and thoſe the ableſt amongſt them too, and who knew beſt of what conſequence Religion was to Politicks, durſt publiſh Works that did not only call their Religion in queſtion, but alſo turn'd it into Ridicule. I ſpeak of *Cicero*, who in his Books of Divination has ſpar'd nothing of what was moſt Sacred at *Rome*. After he had made it evident enough to his very Adverſaries, how great a Folly 'twas to conſult the Entrails of Beaſts, he drives them at laſt to this Anſwer: That the Gods, who are Almighty, change theſe Entrails in the very moment of the Sacrifice, to the end that we ſhou'd by them know their Pleaſure in things to come. This Anſwer was given by *Chryſippus*, by *Antipater* and *Poſſidonius*, all great Philoſophers and chief of the Party of the Stoicks. *Ha! what ſay you?* cries *Cicero: the very old Women are not ſo credulous as you are. Can you believe* (ſays he) *that the ſame Calf has the Liver well-diſpos'd, if choſen for the Sacrifice by one, and ill-diſpos'd, if choſen by another? Can this Diſpoſition of the Liver be chang'd in an inſtant, to accommodate it ſelf to the Fortune of thoſe that ſacrifice? See you not, that it is Chance that makes the choice of Victims? Does not Experience tell you ſo? For it oftentimes happens that the Entrails of one Victim may foretel ſomething that is unfortunate and terrible, and thoſe which are immediately after ſacrific'd foretel moſt happy Events. What then becomes of the Menaces of theſe firſt Entrails? What! are the Gods ſo ſoon appeas'd? But you'll reply, That in a Bull, which* Cæſar *was ſacrificing, there was no Heart found; and ſince this Animal cou'd not live*

live without a Heart, it must of necessity be, that the Heart vanish'd just in the moment of the Sacrifice. Is it possible, that you shou'd have Sense enough to know, that this Bull cou'd not live without an Heart, and yet have not enough to perceive, that this Heart cou'd not vanish in a moment, I know not whither? And a little after he adds, *Believe me, you ruine all Physicks by defending the Art of Sooth-sayers: for then it is not the ordinary Course of Nature that gives Birth and Death to all things: and there are some Bodies which come from nothing and shall return to nothing. What Naturalist ever held this Opinion?*

I cite this Passage of *Cicero*'s, but as an Example of the extream Liberty with which he insulted over that Religion which he himself profess'd. In a thousand other places he shows no more Favour to Sacred Fowls, the Flights of Birds, and all the Miracles with which the Annals of the Chief Priest were fill'd. Why did they not Indict him for his Impiety? Why did not all the People regard him with Horror? Why did not all the College of Priests rise up against him? But we have reason to believe that among the Pagans, Religion was a Practice, the Speculation of which was very indifferent. They did as others did, but believ'd what they themselves pleas'd. This Principle is very extravagant; but the People who knew nothing of the Impertinency of it, were content with it; and the Philosophers submitted to it very willingly, because it gave them freedom enough.

So that we may see that all the Pagan Religion was meer Ceremony, in which the Mind bore

bore no part. The Gods are angry; their Thunder is ready to be diſcharg'd, how ſhall they be appeas'd? Muſt we repent us of the Crimes we have committed? Muſt we re-enter into the Paths of that natural Juſtice which ought to be among all Men? Not at all; we need only take a Calf of ſuch a Colour, calv'd at ſuch a time, and cut the Throat of it with ſuch a Knife, and this will diſarm the Wrath of all the Gods: Nay farther, it is permitted you to laugh at the Sacrifice, if you have a mind to it; 'twill go never the worſe with you.

Probably 'twas ſo alſo with the Oracles: every one believ'd, that wou'd; however they ceas'd not to conſult 'em. So great a force Cuſtom has over the Minds of Men, that there is no need of Reaſon to joyn with it.

CHAP. VIII.

That other Men, beſides Philoſophers, have had little Eſteem for Oracles.

HIſtories are full of *Oracles*, which were either deſpis'd by thoſe who receiv'd 'em, or alter'd according to their Fancy. * *Pactias* a *Lydian*, and Subject of the *Perſians*, being fled to *Cume* a Greek Town, the *Perſians* ſent to have him deliver'd up; the *Cumeans* preſently conſult the *Oracles* of the *Branchides*, to know what they ought to do with him; the *Oracle* anſwered, That they ſhou'd deliver up *Pa-*

* Herodot. *Book the Firſt.*

Pactias. *Aristodicus*, one of the principal *Cumæans*, who was not of his mind, obtained, through his Credit, that they should send a second time to the *Oracle*, and caus'd himself to be made one of the Deputies; but the *Oracle* made the same answer it had done before. *Aristodicus*, unsatisfied with this, as he was walking about the Temple, endeavoured to fright away certain little Birds which were building their Nests there; whereupon he presently heard a Voice from the Sanctuary, crying, *Detestable Mortal, how dare you fright from this place, those who are under my Protection? And yet, great God,* (replied *Aristodicus*) *you order us to expel* Pactias, *who is under ours? Yes,* (answered the God) *I do order it, to the end that you who are an impious People, may be the sooner destroyed, and that you may come no more hither to importune me with your Questions.* It seems by this, that the God was press'd home, since he had recourse to Railing; but it appears also, that *Aristodicus* did not overmuch believe, that it was a God who gave these *Oracles*, because he went about to entrap him by the Comparison of the Birds; and after he had in effect trapp'd him, 'tis likely that he believ'd him less a God than he did before. The *Cumæans* themselves were not much perswaded of his being a Deity, since they believed a second Deputation might obtain a contrary Answer, or that at least the God might consider of what he had to say. By the way I observe, that *Aristodicus*, when he had laid his Snare for the God, could not but foresee, that they would not let him fright away the Birds from so

ſo holy a Sanctuary without ſaying any thing to him; and that the Prieſts were extreamly jealous of the Honour of their Temples.

The People of *Egina* * had ravag'd the Coaſt of *Attica*, and the Athenians prepar'd themſelves for an Expedition amongſt them; at what time there came an *Oracle* from *Delphos*, threatning 'em with utter Ruine in caſe they made War with thoſe of *Egina*, within the compaſs of thirty Years; but when thoſe thirty Years were paſt, they were only to build a Temple to *Æacus*, and to undertake the War, and then all things wou'd ſucceed well. The Athenians, who burnt with a Deſire of Revenge, ſplit the *Oracle* in half, and took notice of that part of it only, which related to the Temple of *Æacus*, which they built out of Hand; but as to the thirty Years, they ſlighted that, and applyed themſelves immediately to attack the Ægineans, and obtained all the Advantages imaginable. This was not a particular Perſon, who had ſo little Regard for the Authority of *Oracles*, but a whole Commonwealth, and that a very ſuperſtitious one too.

* Herodot. *Lib.* 5.

It is not very eaſie, to tell what kind of Regard the Pagans had for their Religon: For we ſaid a little while ago, that they contented themſelves with the outward Reſpect, which their Philoſophers paid to the *Oracles*; but this was not always ſo; for I am not certain, that *Socretes* refuſed to offer Incenſe to the Gods, or behaved himſelf like other People at the Publick Feſtivals; but this I am ſure of, that the Rabble accuſed him of Atheiſm, tho' they could

could only gueſs at his Opinion in this Point; for he never openly explained himſelf. The People knew well enough what was taught publickly in the Schools of Philoſophers; how then could they ſuffer Opinions, contrary to the eſtabliſhed Worſhip (and often-time even againſt the Exiſtence of the Gods) to be there maintained? At leaſt, they knew perfectly well, what was play'd upon the Theaters; for thoſe Shows were made for them: and it is ſure the Gods were never treated with leſs Reſpect, than in the Comedies of *Ariſtophanes*. *Mercury* in his *Plutus* complains that Sight was reſtored to the God of Riches, who had till that time been blind, and that *Plutus* now beginning equally to favour all the World, the other Gods (to whom People no longer made Sacrifices to obtain Wealth) were ſtarved for Hunger: And *Mercury* carries the Humour on ſo far, as to look out for ſome mean Imployment in a Citizen's Houſe, that he might have Meat aud Drink. *The Birds* of *Ariſtophanes* are alſo very bold. All the Comedy turns upon this, That a certain City of Birds, which was deſigned to be built in the Air, would interrupt the Trade and Correſpondence that was carried on between the Gods and Men; and by rendering the Birds Maſters of all, would reduce the Gods to the utmoſt Miſery. I leave you to judge, if this be not mighty devout. Yet this was the ſame *Ariſtophanes*, who endeavoured to excite the Rabble againſt the pretended Impiety of *Socrates*: There is therefore ſomething, which I know not how to expreſs, that is often found in the Affairs of this World.

World. And it is apparent by these Examples, and may be made so by an Infinity of others, if there were occasion, that the People were sometimes in a Humour to hear with delight their Religion rallied upon, and turned into a Jest; and if they observed Ceremonies, it was only to free themselves from those Inconveniences which attend an open Neglect of them; but 'tis evident, that at the bottom, they had not overmuch Faith in them: and they had just the same Respect for *Oracles*: For most commonly, they consulted them, that they might have no occasion to consult them; and if the Answers were not accommodated to their Designs, they did not much trouble themselves to obey them; for perhaps, it was no constant Opinion even amongst the common People, that *Oracles* were delivered by a Divine Power.

After all this, it would be unnecessary to mention the Histories of those great Captains, who thought it no Crime, to reckon themselves above both *Oracles* and Auguries. And what is most remarkable, is, that this Disesteem of Religion was practised even in the first Ages of the Roman Commonwealth: In those times of happy Ignorance, when Men were so scrupulously fond of their Religion, and when (as *Titus Livius* says, in a place which I am going to cite) Philosophy, which taught Men to despise the Gods, was not yet known.

* *Papirius* made War with the Samnites, and in a certain conjuncture of time, when the Roman Army with an extreme Ardor, desired to come to a Battle, the

* *Liv. l.* 10.

the ſacred Chickens (forſooth) muſt be conſulted; but the Earneſtneſs to fight was ſo general, that though the Chickens eat nothing at all, when they put them out of the Coop, yet thoſe, who were appointed to obſerve the Augury, reported to the Conſul, that they had eaten very well: Upon this, the Conſul promiſed to his Soldiers both a Battel and Victory. But however ſecret this Augury was kept, the Deceit broke out at laſt, and there aroſe a great Conteſt amongſt the Keepers of the Chickens, about the falſe Report that was made: The noiſe of which came to the Ears of *Papirius*, who ſaid, That for his part, he had received a very favourable Augury, and that he was ſatisfied with it, and if what was told him were untrue, let thoſe, whoſe Buſineſs it was to take the Augury, look to it; for all the Evil would fall upon their Heads. Immediately therefore he ordered, that thoſe unhappy People, the Keepers of the ſacred Chickens ſhould be placed in the firſt Ranks, and ſo before the Signal of the Battel was given, an Arrow (from whence ſhot none knew) pierced that poor unlucky Keeper who had given a falſe account of the Augury; as ſoon as the Conſul heard this News, he cried out aloud——— *The Gods are here preſent: The Criminal is puniſh'd: They have diſcharged all their Anger on him, who deſerved it, and we have now all the reaſon in the World to hope the beſt.* Then immediately he cauſed the Signal to be given, and gained an intire Victory over the Samnites.

It is very apparent, that the Gods had a leſs ſhare in the Death of this poor Keeper than

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Papirius; and that the General had a Design, by his Death, to encourage those Soldiers, whom the Falsness of the Augury might have terrifi'd; for the Romans were acquainted with these Arts and Tricks in the times of their greatest Simplicity.

It must be confessed then, that we should be much in the Wrong, if we should believe these Auguries and *Oracles*, which the Pagans themselves did not believe. And if we will not think as meanly of them, as some Philosophers, and some Generals of Armies did; yet let us at least have such thoughts of them, as the People themselves sometimes had.

But doubtless (may some object) all the Pagans did not despise *Oracles:* And some particular Persons, that had no regard for them, are not sufficient intirely to discredit them. And to the Authority of those who did not believe them, we need do no more than oppose the Authority of those that did.

But it may be answered, That these two Authorities are not of equal Strength; for the Testimony of those who uphold a thing that is already established, contributes not much to the support of it; but the Testimony of those who do not believe it, is of Force enough to destroy it; for those who do believe a thing, may perhaps not know the Reasons, that may be given against the belief of it; but those who do not believe it, cannot chuse but know, why others believe it.

It is quite contrary, when a new thing is to be introduced; for in that case, the Testimony of those that believe it, carries more weight

with it, than the Testimony of those who do not believe it; for 'tis probably to be supposed, that those who believe it, must needs have examined it; and those who do not believe it, may perhaps not have considered of it.

I will not say, that either in the one or the other Case, the Authority of those who believe, or believe not, is a final Decision; but I will say, that without a regard be had to the Reasons on which the two Parties found themselves, sometimes the Authority of one seems more receivable, and sometimes that of the other. Upon the whole Matter, in quitting a common Opinion, or in receiving a new one, we make use of our Reason (whether it be good or bad;) but there is no need of making use of any to reject a new Opinion, or to take up one that is already common; for we have need of strength to resist a Torrent, but we need none to follow it.

And it avails not to the Credit of *Oracles*, that among those who believe, that there is something in 'em of divine and supernatural, there shou'd be found some Philosophers of great name, such as the Stoicks are; for when Philosophers are once prepossess'd with any thing, they are more incurable than the common People, and are as much blinded with Prejudices and false Reasons, with which they uphold their Opinion. The Stoicks in particular (as proud and Supercilious a Sect as they were) held some Opinions which deserv'd pity: How cou'd they chuse but believe *Oracles*, who believ'd Dreams? The great *Chrysippus* himself adopted some Points for Articles of his Faith, which

which had been more suitable for the Belief of some silly old Woman.

CHAP. IX.

That the Ancient Christians themselves did not very firmly believe that Oracles *were deliver'd by* Dæmons.

ALtho' the Learned Christians in the first Ages, were fond enough of asserting, that *Oracles* were deliver'd by *Dæmons*, yet they wou'd very often reproach the Heathens with their being imposed upon by their Priests: Which thing was undoubtedly true, since they asserted it, even with the hazard of losing this System of *Dæmons*, which they esteemed so favourable to 'em.

Thus *Clement Alexandrinus* speaks in his Third Book of *Tapistries*,

Boast, if you will, of your Oracles, *full of Folly and Impertinence, of those of* Claros, *of* Apollo Pythius, *of* Didymus *of* Amphiarus, *and of* Amphilocus, *you may yet add your Augurs and Interpreters of Dreams and Prodigies. Show us in the Presence of* Apollo Pythius, *those Men who devined by Flower or by Barley, and those who have been so esteemed, because they spoke out of their Bellies. Let the Secrets of the* Ægyptian *Temples, and of the* Hetrurian *Necromancers remain still in Darkness, for they are certainly all but extravagant Impostures and Deceits, no better than meer*

Cheating at Dice: And the Goats which are kept for Devination, and the Ravens which are taught to deliver Oracles, *are but as the Assistance or Zanies of Mountebanks, who cozen all Mankind.*

Eusebius, in the Beginning of his fourth Book of Evangelical Preparations, proposes at large the best Reasons in the World to prove, that *Oracles* could be no other, than Impostures: And it is upon those very Reasons, that I pretend to support my self, when I come to treat of the Cheats of *Oracles* in particular.

Nevertheless, I must confess, that tho' *Eusebius* knew so very well how to prove, that *Oracles* could not be supernatural, yet he attributes them to *Dæmons*; and the Authority of a Man so well instructed with the Reasons on both sides, is a very great Encouragement to the Party which he embraces.

But it is to be noted, that after *Eusebius* had very well proved, that *Oracles* could be no other than the Impostures of Priests, he assures us (without either destroying or weakning those first Proofs) that for all this, they were delivered by *Dæmons*. But he ought to have cited some unsuspected *Oracle*, which had been delivered in such Circumstances, that although many others might be imputed to the Artifices of Priests, yet that could not. But *Eusebius* has done to such thing. This is, as if he should say, I clearly see, that all the *Oracles* can be no other than Cheats; but yet, I will not believe them to be so, because it serves my purpose, that the Devil should now and then enter into an *Oracle*.

This is a very lamentable kind of Reasoning.

But

But I must confess, if *Eusebius* (in the Circumstances of the Times which he lived in) durst not have said openly, that *Oracles* were not the Works of *Dæmons*, it had been excusable; but then in seeming to maintain that they were so, he ought to have managed his Arguments in such a way, that he might have insinuated the contrary with the best Address he was capable of. But we are at liberty to guess at the Reasons, that guided *Eusebius* in this Matter, according to the Esteem we have of him: For my own part, I believe clearly, that he asserted these Oracular *Dæmons*, rather by way of Apology, and from a forced Respect he had for the common Opinion, than on any other Account.

There is a Passage of *Origen*, in his Seventh Book against *Celsus*, which sufficiently proves that he attributed *Oracles* to *Dæmons*, only to accommodate himself to the Times, and to the Disputes, which in that Age were between the Christians and the Pagans: *I might* (said he) *make use of the Authority of* Aristotle, *and the Peripateticks, to render the Pythian* Oracle *suspected: I could draw from* Epicurus *and those of his Sect, an Infinity of things, that would discredit* Oracles; *and I could easily make it appear, that the Greeks themselves made no great Account of them; but conceding that they were not Fictions, nor Impostures, let us examine the Case a little more carefully, and consider, whether there were any Necessity, that a God should have any Business there, and if it were not more reasonable to believe, that they were managed by evil* Dæmons *and* Genii, *that were Enemies to Mankind.*

It is sufficiently evident, that *Origen* was inclined to believe of *Oracles*, as we do; but the

Pagans, who used them for a Proof of the Divinity of their Religion, had no Reason to consent, that they were but the Artifices of their Priests: So, that to gain a little upon the Pagans, there was a necessity of yielding to them, what they maintained with so much Obstinacy, and to let them see, that tho' there might be something of Supernatural in the *Oracles*, yet there was no reason to say, that a true Divinity was concerned in them; and so *Dæmons* were to be brought upon the Stage.

'Tis true, that it had been much better wholly to have excluded even these *Dæmons* from *Oracles*; and by that means, the greatest Blow would indeed have been given to the Pagan Religion that can be imagined. But all the World perhaps did not enter so deep into this Matter, and they thought they had done enough, when by the Hypothesis of *Dæmons*, (which solves the whole Business in two words,) they disparaged all those Miracles, which the Pagans could alledge for their false Worship.

This, it is probable, was the Cause, why in the first Ages of the Church, Men so generally embraced this Opinion concerning *Oracles*. For we see clearly enough into the Darkness of remote Antiquity, to discover, that Christians did not hold this Opinion so much for the Truth, which they found in it, as for the Advantages, which it gave them in their Disputes against Paganism: And could they be born again in the Age wherein we live, I doubt not, but that being then deliver'd, like us, from those strange Notions, that obliged them to that Hypothesis, they would have had (al-

(almost all of them) the same Diseteem of *Oracles*, as we have at this time.

Hitherto, we have only taken away the Prejudices that are contrary to our Opinion, and which are drawn, either from the System of the Christian Religion, or else from Philosophy, with the general Consent of both Pagans and Christians. We have answered all this, not only by making a simple Defence, but very often by starting Objections; but now we shall make our Assaults with with greater Vigour, and demonstrate by all those particular Circumstances, which we can remark in *Oracles*, that they never ought to have been attributed to *Dæmons*.

Chap. X.

That Oracles *were corrupted by Bribery.*

It was so easie a matter to corrupt these *Oracles*, that it was very evident that they were managed by Men. The Pythian Priestess *Philipises*, said *Demosthenes*, when he was complaining that the *Oracles* of *Delphos* were always conformable to the Interest of *Philip*.

* When *Cleomenes*, King of *Sparta*, was minded to dethrone *Demaratus*, the former King, on pretence that he was not the Son of *Ariston* his Predecessor, and that *Ariston* himself had complain'd that his Son was born a little too soon after his Marriage, the *Oracle* was consulted on so diffi-

* Herod. *Lib.* 6.

cult a Question; for the thing was of such a Nature, that it cou'd be decided only by the Gods. But *Cleomenes* himself went beforehand to engage the Chief Priestess of *Delphos*, and so she declar'd that *Demaratus* was not the Son of *Ariston*. The Cheat was sometime after discov'd, and the Priestess depriv'd of her Dignity; for they were bound to revenge this Dishonour done to their *Oracles*, and to endeavour to repair their lost Credit.

* Herod. *Lib.* 5.

* During the time that *Hippias* was Tyrant of *Athens*, some Citizens whom he had banish'd, obtain'd of the Pythian Priestess, by the force of Mony, that when the *Lacedæmonians* shou'd come to consult her (no matter on what affairs) she should always tell 'em, they must deliver *Athens* from Tyrany. And the *Lacedæmonians*, to whom the same thing was always repeated, whatever they came about, believ'd at last, that the Gods wou'd never Pardon them, if they contemn'd their so frequent Orders; and thereupon they took up Arms against *Hippias*, tho' he were their Ally.

If the *Dæmons* delivered *Oracles*, they were always full of Complaisance to those Princes that were once become Redoubted; and 'tis to be noted that Hell had a very great regard for *Alexander* and *Agustus*. Some Historians tell us plainly that *Alexander* had a mind by his absolute Authority to make himself the Son of *Jupiter Ammon*, both for his Interest and the Honour of his Mother, who was suspected to have had a Gallant much less considerable than *Jupiter*: and they add, that before he went to the Temple, he caus'd the God to be adver-

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tis'd of his Will and Pleasure; and the God very honestly obeyed his Command. Other Authors hold, That the Priests found out of themselves this way of flattering *Alexander*. There is none but *Plutarch* that grounds this Divinity of *Alexander* on a Mistake of the Priest of *Ammon*, who saluting this King, and intending to say to him in Greek, *Oh my Son*, pronounc'd a *σ* for a *ν*, (for he was a Lybian, and knew not well how to pronounce the *Greek*;) and the Words with this Change signifie, *Oh Son of* Jupiter. And the whole Court fail'd not to construe this Mistake of the Priest, to the Advantage of *Alexander*; and without doubt the Priest himself made it pass for an Inspiration of the God who had directed his Tongue, and so by *Oracles* afterwards confirm'd his ill Pronunciation. This last manner of relating this History pleases me extreamly, for I love to find very little Originals give rise to mighty Things; this seems to me to be probable, and a Mockery worthy of sporting Fortune.

Ὦ παῖ Διῶ for Ὦ παῖδιον.

* *Augustus* was so in Love with *Livia*, that he took her by force from her Husband, big with Child as she was; and so impatient was his Passion, that he would not deferr his Marriage till she was delivered, but the Action being something extraordinary, the *Oracle* was consulted about it; who knew well how to make its Court to so glorious a Monarch, and was not only content to approve the Marriage, but assur'd him, that Weddings never succeeded better, than when the Bride was

* Pruden.

was already with Child. This seems to me a very strange Maxim.

There were at *Sparta* but two Families, out of which they might chuse their Kings. But *Lysander*, one of the greatest Men that ever *Sparta* bred, fram'd a Design to take away this Distinction, too advantagious for those two Families, and too injurious to all the rest; and to open a way to Royalty for all those who had Merit enough to pretend to it: In order to this, he contriv'd so perplex'd a Plot, that I admire how a Man of Wit could hope to draw any Success from it. *Plutarch* says very well, that it was like a Mathematical Demonstration, to which no Man arrives but by tedious Methods. There was a Woman in *Pontus*, who pretended to be big with Child by *Apollo*; *Lysander* cast his Thoughts upon this Son of *Apollo*, intending to make use of him when he shou'd be born; (this it was to have a very great Foresight) and he causes a Report to be spread abroad, that the Priests of *Delphos* had in their possession very ancient *Oracles* which they were not permitted to read, because *Apollo* had reserv'd that Privilege for some one that should come of his Blood, and who should come to *Delphos* to justifie his Descent. The Child of the Woman at *Pontus* was to be this Son of *Apollo*; and it was contriv'd that amongst those mysterious *Oracles*, so closely conceal'd, there should be one found out, which should declare to the Spartans, that they ought to give the Crown to Desert only, without having any regard to Families. So that now nothing remain'd but to shape up some *Oracles*;

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to get this Son of *Apollo* (who was called *Silenus*) into the Project, to make him come to *Delphos*, and to bribe the Priests. All this was done, which seems to me very surprizing; for what strange Machines must they have made use of, for the accomplishing so great a Design? *Silenus* comes to *Greece*, and prepares to make himself known at *Delphos* for the Son of *Apollo*; but, as ill luck would have it, one of *Lysander*'s Creatures having some Terrors upon him; at last when he found himself embark'd in so dangerous an Affair, spoil'd all.

There is scarce a more remarkable Example to be found in all History of the Corruption of *Oracles*; but in reporting it, I will not dissemble a Truth, which my Author says nothing of; which is, that *Lysander* had before endeavour'd to corrupt many other *Oracles*, but could not accomplish it. *Dodona* refused to take his Money, *Jupiter Ammon* was inflexible, and even the Priests of the place sent Deputies to *Sparta* to accuse *Lysander*; but by the force of his Credit he got himself clear of that Affair. The great Priestess of *Delphos* denied to sell him her Voice. And this makes me believe, that there were in *Delphos* two Colleges, which held no Communication one with another, the one of Priests the other of Priestesses; for *Lysander*, who could not corrupt the great Priestess, could yet sufficiently corrupt the Priests. The Priestesses were those only who deliver'd the *Oracles Viva voce*, and who, with a thousand antick Motions and Grimaces, acted the Possess'd on the *Tripos*, and seemed to rage, with the Inspirations of the God; but

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in all probability the Priests had a Ware-house of written Prophecies, of which they were the Masters, the Dispensers, and the Interpreters.

It is not to be doubted, but that the Priests, for the Honour of their Trade, would seem very nice and scrupulous to those who desir'd to Bribe 'em, especially when things were requir'd wherein there was no reason to hope for much Success; such as was the Novelty, which *Lysander* had a design to introduce into the Government of *Sparta:* and perhaps the Faction of *Agesilaus*, which was against that of *Lysander*, was somewhat jealous of his Project, and had been before-hand with the *Oracles.* Nor is it to be imagin'd, that the Priests of *Ammon* would have taken the pains to have come from the fartherst part of *Libia* to *Sparta*, to have accused so great a Man as *Lysander*, if there had not been a very good Understanding between their *Oracles* and his Enemies, who encouraged them to accuse him.

Chap. XI.

Of the Erection of new Oracles.

The *Oracles*, which were sometimes erected anew, do as much weaken the Hypothesis of *Demons*, as the *Oracles* that were corrupted by Bribery.

After the Death of *Ephæstion*, *Alexander*, to comfort himself, would needs have it believed, that *Ephæstion* was a God; to which, all his Cour-

Courtiers consented without any difficulty: And immediately, Temples were erected in many Cities to *Ephæstion*, Festivals were instituted to his Honour, Sacrifices were made to him, miraculous Cures were attributed to him, and in fine, (that nothing at all might be wanting) they made him deliver *Oracles*. *Lucian* says, that *Alexander*, who was at first astonished to see the Divinity of *Ephæston* have such Success, believed it himself at length to be true, and found a great deal of Pleasure, in thinking not only that he himself was a God, but that he had also the Power of making Gods.

Adrian committed the same Folly for the lovely *Antinous*: In Honour of whose Memory he built the City of *Antinopolis*, he consecrated Temples and Prophets to him (says St. *Jerome:*) Now there were no Prophets, but in those Temples where there were *Oracles*; and there is yet remaining this Greek Inscription:

To Antinous,

The Companion of the Gods of Egypt. M. Ulpius Appollonius's *Prophet.*

After this, we need not wonder, that *Augustus* also delivered *Oracles*, as we find it in *Prudentius:* And certainly *Augustus* was as fit to be worshipped as *Antinous* or *Ephæstion*, who according to all likelihood, owed their Divinity only to their Beauty.

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Without doubt, these new *Oracles* caused even those, who were the least capable of thinking, to make Reflections upon them. Was there not reason to believe, that these were of the same Nature with the Ancient ones? And to make a due Judgment on the beginnings of those of *Amphiaraus*, *Trophonius*, *Orpheus*, and of *Apollo* himself, they needed no more than to consider those of *Ephæstion*, *Antinous* and *Augustus*.

'Tis plain however, that they were not in like Credit with those of more ancient Dates, and that there is a vast difference between them; for they stinted the Gods of the new Edition to certain Answers, that were necessary for the flattering of Princes; but for any thing else, they were not seriously consulted.

For when Questions of Importance were to be asked, they went to *Delphos*. The ancient Tripodes had been in Possession of Futurity, time out of Mind; and the word of a good, sage, experienc'd God, was far more authentick than that of these Upstarts, who were less versed in the Trade. The Roman Emperors, whose Interest it was to advance and set a value on the Divinity of their Predecessors (since themselves claimed the same) would have endeavoured to have render'd the *Oracles* of the deified Emperors (such as *Augustus* was) more celebrated, if it had not been that the People, accustomed to their anicent *Oracles*, could not have the same Confidence in these; for I would willingly believe, that, what Inclination soever they had to the most ridiculous Superstitions, yet they laugh'd at these new *Oracles*, and in general,

neral, at all the Consecrations of new Gods: For how could they possibly take the Eagle, which flew out of the flaming Funeral Pile of a Roman Emperor, to be the Soul of that Emperour, that was taking its Flight to Heaven?

How then came it to pass, that People were deceived at the first Erection of Gods and *Oracles*? Thus it was, as I conjecture: As for the Gods, Paganism had only two principal sorts of them, either Gods who were supposed to be essentially of a Divine Nature, or Gods which did not become so, till after they had been of a humane Nature first. The former sort were declared Gods by the Learned, or by the Legislators with a multitude of Mysteries; and the People neither saw them, nor ever had seen them: The second sort (tho' the whole World knew that they) had been Men, yet they) were made Gods by the Inclination of the People, in Memory of their Vertues. They framed to themselves a very elevated Idea of the one sort, because they were above their View; and of the other, because they loved them. But they could not have that Devotion for a Roman Emperour, who was only made a God by the Favour and Order of the Court, and not by the Love of the People, and who besides this, was known so very lately to have been a Man.

As for the *Oracles*, their first Establishment is not difficult to unfold: For, find me but half a dozen Persons, whom I can perswade that it is not the Sun that makes the Day, and I will not despair of prevailing with a whole Nation to Embrace the same Opinion: For how-

however ridiculous any thing ſeems at firſt, if you can but maintain it for ſome time, ſo that it gains the Authority of Antiquity, it is then ſufficiently proved.

There was on the top of *Parnaſſus* a Hole, out of which an Exhalation came, which was of ſuch a Nature, that it made Goats dance and caper, by fuming into their Heads; and perhaps ſome Body, whoſe Head was filled with this Exhalation became an Enthuſiaſt, fell a talking without knowing what he ſaid, and by chance ſpoke truth. Immediately, there was ſomething Divine fancied to be in this Exhalation, and that it contained the knowledge of Futurity; then they begin to approach this Hole with Veneration, and Ceremonies are by little and little introduced. Thus in all probability, the *Oracle* of *Delphos* was at firſt erected. And as it owed its Original to an Exhalation, which infected the Head, there was a neceſſity that the Pythian Prieſteſs ſhould be in a Fury, when ſhe was to propheſie; but in the greateſt part of the other *Oracles*, Fury was not practiced. Let but one *Oracle* be ſet up, and you need not doubt but a thouſand will follow the Example; for if the Gods can ſpeak in one, why ſhould they not do as well in others? The People ſtruck with the Wonder of the thing, and finding of what uſe it would be, and covetous of the Profit, which they expected from it, deſired nothing more than to ſee *Oracles* ſet up in every place; and in time, all theſe *Oracles* got the Advantage of Antiquity, which ſtood them in great ſtead. And it could not be expected, that the new ones ſhould have ſuch Succeſs,

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ſince they were eſtabliſhed by Princes: whereas the People are moſt willing to believe, what they make themſelves.

Add to all this, that at the time of the firſt inſtitution both of Gods and *Oracles*, Ignorance was much greater than it was afterwards. Philoſophy was not then known in the World, and the moſt extravagant Superſtitions had met with no contradiction from thence. 'Tis true, that thoſe we call *the People* are never mighty knowing; yet the Dulneſs, with which they are always poſſeſs'd, receives ſome difference according to the Ages in which they live. But there are ſome Ages wherein all the World are the People, and thoſe times without compariſon are the moſt favourable for the introduction of Errors. 'Tis no wonder then, that the People had a leſs eſteem for the new *Oracles*, than for the ancient ones; but this makes not the old *Oracles* any whit better than the new ones. Now either a *Dæmon* went to lodge in the Statue of *Ephæſtion*, to deliver *Oracles* from thence (as ſoon as it pleas'd *Alexander* to erect one to him as to a God:) or if the Statue deliver'd *Oracles* without this *Dæmon*, then that of *Apollo Pythius* might do ſo as well. And it ſeems to me very ſtrange and ſurprizing, that the Fancy of *Alexander* ſhould be able to ſend a *Dæmon* to take poſſeſſion of a Statue, which by that means only was to become an eternal occaſion of Error to all Men.

Chap. XII.

Of the Places where Oracles *were.*

We shall now enter upon the History of those Artifices and Cheats, what the Priests practis'd: which contains many things of Antiquity very agreeable and particular.

Countries that were mountainous (and by consequence full of Holes, and Caverns) were always fullest of *Oracles*; such was *Bœotia*, which anciently, as *Plutarch* says, had a number of them. Where by the way you may observe that the *Bœotians* had the repute of being the foolishest Nation of the World; and therefore it was a fit Country for *Oracles*, being full of Blockheads and Caverns.

I cannot believe that the first Establishment of *Oracles* was a design'd Cheat; but that the People fell into some Superstition which gave 'em a beginning, and that afterwards *Men of Wit* made their advantages of 'em: For the Weakness of the People is oftentimes greater than could have been foreseen; and many times those that deceive 'em, think of nothing less, until they themselves give some opportunity for the Fraud. And my Opinion is, that *Oracles* were not therefore placed in *Bœotia*, because 'tis mountainous; but because the *Oracle* of *Delphos* had by chance its beginning there, after the manner which we have related, therefore others, that were made in Imitation of of that in the same Country, were situated also

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in the Caverns; the Conveniences of which for that purpose, were very well known to the Priests.

This Custom afterwards spread it self every-where; for the Pretence of Divine Exhalations render'd these Caverns necessary: and besides Caverns of themselves effect one with a certain Horror, which does not a little advance Superstition; and in things that are only to make impressions on the Imaginations of Men, nothing is to be neglected. It may be also, that the situation of *Delphos* contributed to the making it be esteem'd as a holy Town; it was built on a small Level which was half way up the Mountain of *Parnassus*, and encompass'd with Precipices which fortify'd it without the help of Art: That part of the Mountain which was above it, had the resemblance of a Theater; and the Voice of Men, and the Sound of Trumpets was multiply'd by the Echoes of the Rocks. Do not you believe then, that they knew how to make even these Echoes of great use to 'em?

The Advantages of the Priests and the Majesty of the *Oracles*, do equally require these Caverns; for which reason there was no great number of these Prophetick Temples situated on Plains; but yet there were some, whose Defects the Priests knew well enough how to remedy, and instead of natural Caverns, to accommodate 'em with artificial ones, that is to say, what they call Sanctuaries, which were a sort of Caves where the Divinity perpetually resided, and where none but the Priests ever enter'd.

* Plutar. Dial. *that Oracles are not ceas'd.*

* When the Pythian Prieſteſs placed her ſelf upon the *Tripos*, it was in her Sanctuary, an obſcure place at ſome diſtance from a certain little Chamber, wherein thoſe who came to conſult the *Oracles* were to ſtand. The Entrance of this Sanctuary was all cover'd over with Boughs of Lawrel, by which means thoſe who had the liberty of approaching it, could make no Diſcoveries.

From whence do you think, proceeds the diverſity that is to be found in the Deſcription which the Ancients give of their *Oracles?* It is becauſe they never ſaw what paſs'd in the moſt ſacred Receſſes of their Temples.

For example, They agree not among themſelves about the *Oracle* of *Dodona*, and yet what could be better known to the Greeks? *Ariſtotle*, (as *Suidas* reports) writes, that at *Dodona* there were two Columns, upon one of which there was a Baſon of Braſs, and upon the other a Statue of a Child who held a Whip, the Cords of which being alſo of Braſs made a noiſe againſt the Baſon, when they were agitated by the Wind.

Demon (according to the ſame *Suidas*) ſays, that the *Oracle* of *Jupiter* at *Dodona* is all encompaſs'd with Baſons, of which, when any one is puſh'd againſt the next, the Motion is communicated all round to the reſt, and they make a Din, which continues for ſome time.

Others ſay, that there was a reſounding Oak, which ſhook its Branches and Leaves together, all the while the *Oracle* was conſulted; and its meaning was pronounced by the Prieſteſſes called *Dodonides*. It

It is plain from all this, that there was nothing certain but the Noise, which was to be heard from without; but not seeing the inward Sanctuary, where the *Oracle* resided, they only knew, but by Conjecture, and the fallacious Reports of the Priests what caus'd this Noise. Yet we find in History, that some few had the Privilege to enter into these Sanctuaries; but they were Persons of no less Quality than *Alexander* and *Vespasian*. *Strabo* reports from *Callisthenes*, that *Alexander* enter'd alone with the Priest into the Sanctuary of *Ammon*, and that all the rest heard the *Oracle* only from without.

Tacitus also relates, that *Vespasian*, when he was at *Alexandria*, (having already a Design upon the Empire) would needs consult the *Oracle* of *Serapis*; but before he enter'd, he made every body quit the Temple; and yet for all this, perhaps he did not enter into the Sanctuary. But the Instances of this Privilege are very rare; for my Author averrs, that he never knew of any other than these two; unless you will add what *Tacitus* says of *Titus*, to whom the Priest of *Paphian Venus* discovered in secret many great things, concerning the Designs which he had then in hand. But yet this Example proves less than that of *Vespasian*, that the Priests allow'd great Men the liberty of entring into the Sanctuary of their Temples. Doubtless one ought to have a great deal of Credit with the Priests, to oblige 'em to discover the *Arcana* of their Mysteries; but they did it only to Princes, whose Interest they knew it was to keep the Secret; and who,

in the Circumstances which they were then in, had some particular reason to raise and not lessen the Reputation of *Oracles.*

In these dark Sanctuaries it was, that all the Machines of the Priests lay; and they enter'd into them by intricate Paths under Ground. *Rufinus* describes to us the Temple of *Serapis* full of covert Ways: and (to bring a Testimony yet stronger than his) do not the Holy Scriptures discover to us the Impostures of the Priests of *Belus*, who had a private Conveyance to enter secretly into his Temple, and to take away the Meat which was there offer'd to him? It seems to me, that this History alone ought to decide the whole Question in our favour; for we there have an account of one of the Miracles of Paganism, which was the most universally believ'd, how that the Gods took the pains to come and Eat the consecrated Meat, themselves. Do the Scriptures attribute this Prodigy to *Dæmons?* Not at all; but to the Priests, who were Impostors. And it is in this place alone that the Scriptures vouchsafe to give the description of a Pagan Miracle; and by not advertising us that the rest were not of the same nature, they give us plainly to understand that they were. After all, how much easier was it to perswade People that the Gods descended into Statues to speak to 'em, and give 'em wholesome Instructions, than that they came down to eat the Members of Goats and Sheep? And therefore surely if it was the Priests that eat, and not the Gods; by much stronger reason, it was they that pronounced the *Oracles* in their stead.

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The Cavities of the Sanctuary, increas'd the Voice, and caus'd rebounding Echoes, which imprinted a sort of awful Terror in all that approach'd it: you see also in all the Poets that the Pythian Priestesses strain'd their Voices, so much beyond the pitch of Nature, that they appear'd to be more than Humane. Perhaps too that sort of * Trumpet which multiplies the sound, was not then altogether unknown: and it may be Sir *Samuel Moreland*, has but revived this Secret, which the Pagan Priests knew before him; tho' they chose rather to get Profit by concealing it, than Honour by publishing it. And Father *Kirker* assures us that *Alexander* had one of these Instruments, with which he made himself be heard by his whole Army at the same time. There is one little thing which I will not forget, because it serves to demonstrate the extream Application which the Priests had to Cheating. From the Sanctuary, or bottom of the Temple, there came out sometimes a very agreeable Vapour which fill'd all the place where the Consulters were: It was the arrival of the God, you must know, that perfum'd all. Judge then, if Men who carried on their Impostures so curiously as to descend to these Trifles, would neglect any thing that was essential.

* *Sir Sam. Moreland's Speaking Trumpet.*

CHAP. XIII.

Of the Distinctions of Days, and other Mysteries of Oracles.

THe Priests neglected not any kind of Precaution; and therefore they had certain Days on which no Man was permitted to consult the *Oracle*. This had a mysterious Air, which is still much practic'd in like Matters; but yet the chief Advantage which they drew from it, was, That they could put you off with this Pretext till another time, either if they had no mind to give you any Answer at all, or if they thought fit to have this time of silence for the taking their Measures and making their Preparatives.

On occasion of these pretended unlucky Days, there was deliver'd to *Alexander* one of the pleasantest *Oracles* that ever was. He went to *Delphos* to consult the God, and the Priestess, pretending that it was not then a lawful time to Interrogate, would not enter into the Temple. *Alexander*, who was very rough and impatient, took the Priestess by the Arm, and led her in by force; whereupon she cry'd out, *Ah, my Son, you are not to be resisted. I desire no more*, (says *Alexander*) *this* Oracle *is enough for me.*

But the Priests had got another Secret to gain time when they pleased: Before they would consult the *Oracles* they must Sacrifice; and if the Entrails of the Victim were not lucky,

ky, then the God was not in an Humour to answer; now none judged of the Victims but the Priests: and, for the most part (as it appears by many Examples) they were alone when they examin'd 'em: And often, to delay the time, they would make Men begin their Sacrifice a new, and bring a second Victim, tho' they had already offer'd one that had the finest Heart and Liver in the World.

What were call'd the Mysteries and secret Ceremonies of the Gods, were without doubt the best Artifices the Priests could invent to keep People in the Dark; and yet they could not so well hide the Juggle, but that the Cheat would be suspected by many Persons; and therefore they contrived among themselves to establish certain Mysteries, which should ingage those that were initiated into them to an inviolable Secrecy.

'Tis true there were Mysteries in those Temples where there where no *Oracles*, but there were no *Oracles*, but what had Mysteries; as for Instance in that of *Delphos*: *Plutarch*, in his Dialogues, so often cited, says, That there was no Person in the Town of *Delphos*, nor in all that Country, that was not initiated into their Mysteries, and so every body had his Dependance on the Priests; and if any one had dared to have opened his Mouth against 'em, they presently cried out, *O the Atheist! O the impious Man!* and he would have drawn upon himself, by his plain Dealing, such Inconveniences as he could never have got quit of. But yet, if there had been no such Mysteries, the Inhabitants of *Delphos*, would have been al-

ways

ways obliged to have conceal'd the Knavery of their Priests; for *Delphos* was a City which had no other Revenue but that of its Temple, and was maintain'd only by its *Oracle*; but for all that, the Priests were not contented till they had secured the People to themselves by a double Tie, and so they annexed Superstition to their Interest. And without doubt a Man who had spoken Ill of their *Oracles*, would have been wondrous well received in such a Town.

Those, who were initiated into their Mysteries, gave also further Security for their Discretion; for they were oblig'd to make a Confession to their Priests of all the most private Actions of their Lives: so that by this means they became Slaves to their Priests, that their own Secrets might be kept.

It was upon this sort of Confession that a Lacedæmonian, who was going to initiate himself into the Mysteries of *Samothrace*, spoke roundly thus to the Priest: *If I have committed any Crimes, surely the Gods are not ignorant of 'em.*

Another answer'd almost after the same manner: *Is it to you, or to God we ought to confess our Crimes? It is to God*, says the Priest. *Well then, retire thou*, answered the Lacedæmonian, *and I'll confess 'em to God.* These Lacedæmonians were not very full of the Spirit of Devotion, and I do not doubt but there might have been some Men wicked enough to go and make a false Confession, to get himself initiated into their Mysteries, and then afterwards to make a Discovery of all their Extravagancies, and publish the Cheats of the Priests.

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I believe that this Misfortune may have happened, for tho' Priests used all possible means to prevent such Discoveries: They observed narrowly what Persons they were, with whom they had to do; and, I'll warrant you, the two Lacedæmonians, whom we have mentioned, were not admitted. Besides, they declared the Epicureans incapable of being initiated into their Mysteries, because they were a sort of Men, who made it their Business to laugh at them; and I believe, they never delivered *Oracles* to them: Nor was it very difficult to know them; for all those among the Greeks, who applied themselves to Literature, made choice of some Sect of Philosophy, or other, and took their Appellation from that Sect, almost as we do from a Country. For Example, there were three *Demetriuses*, which were thus distinguished; one was *Demetrius* the Cynick, the other, *Demetrius* the Stoick, and the third, *Demetrius* the Peripatetick. This Custom of excluding the Epicureans from all Mysteries, was so general, and so necessary for the securing of Sacred Things, that it was made use of by that grand Cheat, whose Life *Lucian* describes so agreeably; I mean that *Alexander*, who fooled the Greeks so long a time with his Serpents: But he also added the Christians to the Epicureans; for he thought one no better than the other: And before he began his Ceremonies, he always cried, *Let the Christians be put out.* To whom the People answered in a kind of Chorus, *Let the Epicureans be put out also.* Nay, he did far worse than all this; for seeing himself tormented by these two sorts

of

of People, (who, tho' pushed by different Interests, yet conspired together to turn his Ceremonies into Ridicule) he declared that *Pontus* (where he then lived) was filled with wicked People, and that the God, whose Prophet he was, would speak no more, if they did not rid themselves of them; and upon this, they murdered all the Epicureans and the Christians.

Daphnean Apollo, in the Suburbs of *Antioch*, was in the same Uneasiness, when, in the time of *Julian* the Apostate, he answered all those, who asked him the Cause of his Silence, that they must lay the Blame on certain dead People, who were interred in the Neigbourhood. These dead People were Christian Martyrs, and among the rest, St. *Babilas*. Now the current Opinion is, that it was the Presence of these blessed dead Bodies, which deprived the *Damons* of the Power of speaking in the *Oracle*; but 'tis more probable, that the great concourse of Christians, which daily visited the Sepulchers of these Martyrs, incommoded the Priests of *Apollo*, who did not care that such clear-sighted Enemies should be Witnesses of their Actions; and therefore they endeavoured by this false *Oracle*, to obtain of the Pagan Emperor, that he would cause these Bodies, of which the God complained, to be cast out from thence.

But let us return to the Artifices of the Priests, of which the *Oracles* are full: And to comprehend in one Reflection alone, all those that can be made upon them, I would fain have some one tell me, why the *Damons* could not

not predict what was to come, unleſs they were in Holes, in Caverns and in obſcure Places? And why they did not animate a Statue, in ſome common Road, where four High-ways met, expoſed on all ſides to the View of the World? But it may perhaps be ſaid, that thoſe *Oracles*, which were given in anſwer to ſealed Letters, and thoſe that were delivered by Dreams, could not have been without *Demons*; but 'twill be very eaſie for us to ſhow, that they had nothing in them more wonderful and miraculous than the reſt.

CHAP. XIV.

Of Oracles *that were delivered in Anſwer to Sealed Letters.*

THe Prieſts were not ſo ſcrupulous in that Point, as not to unſeal the Letters that were brought them. The Cuſtom was to lay them upon the Altar: After which the Temple was to be ſhut; but the Prieſts knew very well how to enter, without being perceived. Or elſe, they put the Letters into the Hands of the Prieſts, that they might ſleep upon them, and receive in a Dream the Anſwer, which they were to return: And in both Caſes, they had the leiſure to open them privately. For the doing this, they had many ſecret Arts: Some of which we ſee practiſed by the falſe Prophet of *Lucian*. And they are to be ſeen in *Lucian* himſelf by any one, that has the

the Curiosity to know how the Letters of the Ancients were to be opened, without its being perceived that they were so.

Certainly, they made use of some of their Secrets, to open those Letters, that the Governour of *Cilicia* (of whom *Plutarch* speaks) had sent to the *Oracle* of *Mopsus*, which was at *Mallus*, a City of that Province. The Governour knew not what to think of the Gods; for he was possessed by the Epicureans with many Doubts, which they had put into his Head: So that, he was resolved, as *Plutarch* pleasantly observes, to send a Spie among the Deities, to learn what he could of them: So he gave him a Letter very carefully sealed, to carry to the *Oracle* of *Mopsus*. This Envoy came, and, as the Custom was, laid his Letter upon the Altar, and himself slept in the Temple, where he saw in a Dream, a Man, very well made, who said to him, *Black*. He carried back this Answer to the Governour with his Letter sealed just as he sent it, to all appearance. The Answer seemed very ridiculous to the Epicureans, that were at Court; but himself was struck with Astonishment and Wonder at it; and opening his Letter before them, he showed them what he had written, which was this Question: *Shall I Sacrifice to you a white or a black Bullock?* After this Miracle, he was all his Life very much devoted to the God *Mopsus*. We will hereafter discover to you the Mystery of the Dream; but it is sufficient at present to tell you, that there is no doubt, but that the Letters were opened and sealed again with great Dexterity and Address,

for

for what neceſſity was there of ſending a Letter to the Temple, if a *Damon* was to make the Anſwer? And if it ſometimes happened ſo, that the Prieſts durſt not venture to open the Letter, then they endeavoured by their Cunning, to diſcover what Men came to the *Oracle* about; for they were commonly Perſons of Note, and who had ſome Deſign or Paſſion in their Heads, that was not unknow to the World. And the Prieſts had ſo much Converſation with thoſe that came to conſult, either at their Sacrifices, or during the Delays, that were made by the *Oracle*, before it would anſwer, that it was not difficult to draw from their own Mouths (or at leaſt to conjecture) what was the Cauſe of their Voyage: They made them offer one Sacrifice after another, till they had gotten ſome Light into their Affairs: They put them alſo into the Hands of certain little Officers of the Temple, who, (under pretence of ſhowing them the Antiquities, the Statues, the Paintings, and the Offerings,) managed the Matter ſo well, as to pump many things out of them concerning the Buſineſs which they came about. Theſe Antiquaries (like thoſe who live upon this Trade now in *Italy*) were in all the Temples that were any thing conſiderable. They knew by Heart all the Miracles that were done, they ſet forth to you the Power and Wonders of their God, and they recounted to you a long Story of every Preſent that was conſecrated to him. And therefore, *Lucian* ſays very pleaſantly, that all this ſort of Men lived and ſubſiſted on Fables; and that in *Greece*, they would have been very an-

angry to have been told truth, tho' it had cost them nothing. If those who came to consult the *Oracle*, would not tell all themselves, yet their Servants could not hold their Peace. You must know, that in an *Oracle*-Town, there were scarce any Persons but *Oracle*-Officers: Some were Prophets and Priests; others, Poets (who put into Verse the *Oracles*, which were delivered in Prose;) others, simple Interpreters; others, little Sacrificers, who killed the Victims, and examined their Intrails; others, Sellers of Perfumes and Incense, or of Beasts for the Sacrifices; others, Antiquaries: and in fine, all the rest were but Inn-keepers, whom the great resort of Strangers inriched. Now all these People were for the Interest of the *Oracle* and the God: And if by the means of the Servants belonging to these Strangers, they discovered any thing worth the knowing, you need not doubt but they soon advertized the Priests of it.

The false Prophet, *Alexander*, who had set up his *Oracle* in *Pontus*, had Correspondents even in *Rome* it self, who sent him an Account of the most secret Affairs of those who went to Consult him; by this means he could answer, without the Trick of opening their Letters. And these Correspondencies were doubtless not unknown to the Priests of *Apollo* of *Claros*, if it be true, that it was sufficient only to tell them the Names of those that consulted them. *Tacitus* speaks thus of them in his Second Book of Annals: Germanicus *went to consult* Apollo *of* Claros, *where a Woman does not deliver the* Oracles, *as at* Delphos; *but a Man*

cho

chosen out of certain Families, and who is almost always Miletus; *you need tell him only the Number and Names of them that come to consult him; and then he retires into a Grotto, and having taking some Water from a certain secret Fountain there, he answers you in Verse, to whatever you have in your Thoughts, though for the most part, he is a very ignorant Fellow.*

Here we may observe, that the *Oracle* of *Delphos* was committed to the management of a Woman, because she had nothing else to do there, but to make ridiculous and antick Gestures, and to act the being possessed and inspired; but because that of *Claros* had more Difficulty in it, therefore a Man only was to be intrusted with it. We may further remark, that the Ignorance of the Prophet, (which was indeed the greatest Wonder of the *Oracle*,) could not be very easily discovered; for the *Damon* of the *Oracle*, as much a *Damon* as he was, laid it down for an indispensible Rule, that they must bring him the Names of those who consulted him. But we are not come to that yet; it is sufficient to have shown how they could answer, not only to seal'd Letters, but also to simple Thoughts. It is true, they could not answer to the Thoughts of all the World: For what the Priest of *Claros* did for *Germanicus*, he could not do for a private Citizen of *Rome*.

CHAP. XV.

Of Oracles *delivered in Dreams.*

THE Number of *Oracles* delivered in Dreams is very great; for this Way had more of Wonder in it than any other, and yet was not very difficult in the Practice. The most famous of all these *Oracles* was that of *Trophonius* in *Bœotia: Trophonius* was but a simple Heroe, but his *Oracle* was delivered with more Ceremonies than those of any God.

Pausanias himself, who had been to consult it, and who had pass'd through all its Ceremonies, has left us a very ample Description of it: And I believe, that an exact Abridgment of his Relation will not be disagreeable to the Reader.

Before any Body descended into the Den of *Trophonius*, they were obliged to pass a certain number of Days in a kind of little Temple or Chapel call'd the Chapel of good Fortune, and of the good Genius. During this time they used Expiations of all sorts; they abstain'd from hot bathings; they wash'd themselves very often in the River *Hercinas*; they sacrific'd to *Trophonius* and all his Family, to *Apollo*, to *Jupiter*, surnam'd the King, to *Saturn*, to *Juno*, to one *Ceres Europa*, who had been Nurse to *Trophonius*; and they lived only upon the Flesh of the Sacrifices. It is also more than probable that the Priests lived upon nothing else. The Entrails of all these Victims were to be examined,

amined, to see if *Trophonius* thought fit that the Consulters should descend into his Den; but if these had yielded all the most happy Omens in the World, yet it would not do; for the decisive Entrails were those of a certain Ram, which was to be sacrific'd last; and if they were favourable, then the Consulters were led in the Night to the River *Hercinus*, where two young Lads about thirteen or fourteen years Old, rubbed all their Bodies over with Oil; then they conducted them to the Source of the River, and there they made them drink of two sorts of Water; those of *Lethe*, which effaced out of their Minds all the prophane Thoughts which before possess'd 'em; and those of *Mnemosyne*, which had the Virtue to make them remember whatsoever they should see in the sacred Den. After all these Preparatives, they were show'd the Statue of *Trophonius*, to which they made their Prayers; and then they were covered with Linnen Vests, which were girt about them with certain sacred Band-lets, and so at last they were admitted to the *Oracle*.

The *Oracle* stood upon a Mountain, and was encompassed with a Wall of white Stones, upon which Obelisks of Brass were erected: Within this Circle was a Cavern of the Figure of an Oven, cut out by Art, whose Entrance was so strait, that Men did not descend into it by Stairs but by little Ladders, and when they were come to the Bottom, they found another little Cavern, whose Entrance was yet straiter: Here they laid themselves down upon the Earth, and took into each Hand certain Compositions

of Honey which they were obliged to carry, and then they put their Feet within the opening of the little Cavern, and immediately they perceived themselves pulled into it with much force and suddenness.

Then it was that things to come were declared to 'em; but not to all in the same manner; for some heard and did not see, and those that saw where not to hear. After this they came out of the Den, creeping upon the Earth, as they entered in, with their Feet foremost: Immediately they were put into the Chair of *Mnemosyne*, where they were asked what they had seen or heard; thence they were led into the Chapel of the good Genius, being still quite amaiz'd and out of their Wits; but retrieving their Senses by little and little, they began to be able to Laugh; for till then the Grandeur of the Mysteries, and the Divinity with which they were filled, had prevented it; though for my part I think one may well wonder how they could refrain so long.

Pausanias tells us that there was one Man who enter'd into the Den of *Trophonius* and never came out again: This was a certain Spy that *Demetrius* sent thither, to see if there were any thing in that Holy Place, worth the plundering. The Body of this unhappy Man was afterwards found a far off from thence; for 'tis to be suppos'd that he was cast out of the sacred Den by some more secret way than he enter'd into it.

It is very easie for us to make Reflections upon all this; for what leisure and opportunity could the Priests want during all the Sacrifices which

which they obliged Men to make, to qualifie them for the entrance into this sacred Den? For certainly *Trophonius* knew how to choose his Men, and would not receive every Body. How did all these Washings, Expiations, and Night-watchings, and these Passages into their strait and obscure Caverns, fill Mens Minds with Superstition, Dread and Fear? How many Machines were at work in those dark places? The History of the Spy of *Demetrius* assures us, that there was no Security in the Den, for those who came thither with malicious Intentions; and that besides the sacred Passage into it, which was known to all the World, the Den had another secret one, which was known only to the Priests. When Men were drawn in by their Feet, it was doubtless done by Cords, (tho' not perceiv'd;) for they could not put their Hands to feel what it was that drew 'em, because they were embaras's'd with those Compositions of Honey, which they were oblig'd not to let go. And perhaps those Caverns were full of Perfumes and Odour which stupefied the Brain: And the Waters of *Lethe* and *Mnemosyne* were, also ('tis probably) prepar'd for the same effect. To say nothing of the frightful Sights and the Noises which they might be terrified withal; and when they came out from thence little better than distracted, they talk'd strangely of what they had seen or heard; so that People taking advantage of their Disorder, might collect what they pleas'd, and change it as they thought fitting, and in fine, interpret it as they listed themselves.

Add to all this, that there were some of those *Oracles* which were delivered in Dreams, where one must prepare one's self by fasting, as that of * *Amphiaraus* in *Attica*; and then if your Dream could not receive a clear Interpretation, they made you sleep again in the Temple, (at fresh Charges) and never fail'd to fill your Head with Fancies fit to make you Dream of Gods and extraordinary things: And for the most part, you were to sleep upon the Skins of Victims, which perhaps were rubb'd with a Drug which had some odd effect on the Brain.

* Philostatus, *Li.* 2. *Life of* Apollonius.

But when it was the Priests who sleeping upon the sealed Letters, had themselves the Prophetick Dreams, you may easily imagine, that those Dreams were not very difficult to unfold.

Indeed the Care, that the Pagan Priests took to hide their Impostures, seems to have been greater than it needed to have been; for if People were credulous and stupid enough to content themselves with the Dreams of the Priests, and to give credit to them, then there was no necessity, to suffer them to dream in the Temples: And the Priest might have reserved this Privilege to themselves alone, without any Contradiction. For considering what sort of People they were, whom they had to do withal, it was too much Honour for them, to be cheated with Precaution and Address.

There was in *Achaia* * an *Oracle* of *Mercury*, which was delivered in this manner: After many Ceremonies,

* *Pausanias.*

nies, they whiſpered the God in the Ear, and asked him what Queſtion they pleas'd, and afterwards they ſtopt their own Ears with their Hands, and the firſt Words which they heard after they were come out of the Temple, was taken to be the Anſwer of the God. And to the end that the Prieſts might more eaſily cauſe them to hear what they pleas'd, and the impoſture not be diſcover'd, this *Oracle* was always to be conſulted in the Night.

CHAP. XVI.

Of the Ambiguity of Oracles.

ONe of the greateſt Secrets of the *Oracles*, and one of the things which moſt of all aſſures us that they were managed by Men, is their Ambiguity, and the Art that was uſed to contrive ſuch Anſwers as would be ſuitable to any Event that was likely to happen.

* When *Alexander* fell ſick all of a ſudden at *Babylon*, ſome of the Principal of his Court went to paſs a Night in the Temple of *Serapis*, to inquire of that God, if it were not fit for 'em to bring their King thither to be cured by him. The God anſwer'd, that it was better for him to remain where he was. *Serapis* had reaſon; for if he had adviſed the bringing *Alexander* thither, and he had died by the way, or in the Temple itſelf, what would they not have ſaid? But if the King continued at *Babylon* and recover'd

* Arian, *Lib.* 7.

ver'd his Health there, what a mighty Glory would it have brought the *Oracle?* And if he died, it might be said to be the best that could befal him after the Conquests that he had made, which if he lived, he could neither augment nor preserve. And without doubt this last Interpretation was made for the Honour of *Serapis*, after *Alexander* was Dead.

Macrobius says, that when *Trajan* had a Design of Attacking the Parthians, he was desired to consult the *Oracle* of the City *Heliopolis* about it, whither the manner was only to send a sealed Letter. Now, tho' *Trajan* put no great Confidence in *Oracles*, yet he sent a sealed Letter thither, in which there was nothing written, and they sent him back a suitable Answer, that is, none at all. So that *Trajan* being now convinced of the Divinity of *Oracles*, sends another sealed Letter, in which he demands of the God, Whether he should finish the War, that he had undertaken, and return to *Rome*, or not? The God ordered, that they should take a Vine, which was one of the Offerings of the Temple, and cut it in pieces, and so carry it to *Trajan*. The Event, says *Macrobius*, was conformable to the *Oracle*; for *Trajan* dying in this War, his Bones, which were represented by the broken Vine, were carried to *Rome*.

All the World knew for certain that the Emperor designed to make War with the Parthians, and that this was the Business about which he consulted the *Oracle*: And, the *Oracle* was so cunning, as to return him an Allegorical Answer, and so general an one, that it could not

not fail of being true: For if *Trajan* had returned to *Rome*, either Victorious, but hurt, or having loſt ſome part of his Soldiers; or if he were Overcome, and his Army put to Flight; or if any Diviſion had been amongſt his Men; or if any Mutiny had happened amongſt the Parthians; or if any had happened at *Rome* in the Abſence of the Emperor; if the Parthians had been wholly conquered; or if they had been but partly worſted, or that they had been abandoned by ſome of their Allies, in any one of theſe caſes, this broken Vine miraculouſly had foretold all: And there was no queſtion, but ſome one of theſe would happen. And I believe the Bones of the Emperor that were carried to *Rome*, and by which they explained the *Oracle*, were, for all that, the only thing of which the *Oracle* never thought.

This Vine puts me in Mind of a kind of *Oracle* that accommodated itſelf to every thing, of which, as *Apuleus* tells us, the Prieſts of the Goddeſs of *Syria* were the Inventors. They made two Verſes, the Sence whereof was this:

Two Oxen yok'd together cut the Earth,
And make the Fields produce a fruitful Birth.

Now there was no Queſtion, which they could not Anſwer with theſe two Verſes. For if they were conſulted upon a Marriage, it was the ſame thing, *Oxen yoked together, and a fruitful Birth.* If they were conſulted about the Purchace of any Land, again, it was, *Toked Oxen, and fruitful Fields.* If about a Journey; *the Oxen yoked together*, and ſo ready to go forth,

and

and the fruitful Fields promised a great Profit or Success by the Journey. If one went to War, *these Oxen under the Yoke*, do clearly signifie, that you shall put your Enemies under the Yoke. Certainly, this Goddess of *Syria* did not love much Tatling, aud had found out the true Secret to satisfie all Questions with one single Answer.

Those, who received these ambiguous *Oracles*, took the pains very willingly to justifie them, by adjusting the Success and Prediction together. And oftentimes, that which had but one Sence (in the Intention of those who delivered the *Oracle*,) was, after the Event, found to have two. For the Impostors might be secure, that their Honour would be preserved with all the Care imaginable by those very Persons whom they abused. Thus, when the false Prophet *Alexander* was asked by *Rutilianus*, what Masters he should provide for his Son; he answered, that he should let him have *Pythagoras*, and *Homer*. *Rutilianus* took it in the plain Sence, that he should study Philosophy and Humanity. But the young Man dying within a few Days after, they represented to *Rutilianus*, that the Prophet was very much mistaken: But *Rutilianus* found out (with a very great deal of Subtilty) that the Death of his Son was foretold by the *Oracle*, becaus it appointed *Pythagoras* and *Homer*, two dead Men, for his Tutors.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

The Cheats of the Oracles *manifestly discovered.*

BUt there is now no need of being any further solicitous to detect the Cunning of the Priests, by Subtilties spun almost as finely as their own; for they were fully and clearly discovered to the Eyes of the whole World, when the true Religion triumphed entirely over Paganism, under the Christian Emperors.

Theodoret says, that *Theophilus* Bishop of *Alexandria*, shewed the Inhabitants of that Town, the hollow Statues, into which the Priests privately crept to deliver their *Oracles*.

When by the Order of *Constantine* the Temple of *Æsculapius* in *Cilicia*, was pluck'd down, *they chased thence*, (says *Eusebius*, in the Life of this Emperor,) *not a God, nor a* Dæmon, *but the Cheat, that had so long deluded the People.* He adds, that in general, in the demolished Idols, they found no Gods at all, nor *Dæmons*, nor so much as a melancholy Shade or obscure Spester; but only some Hay, Straw, or Ordures, or the Bones of dead Men. It is from him, that we learn the History of *Theotechnus*, who set up in the City of *Antioch*, the Statue of *Jupiter, God of Friendship*; which questionless was contrived to deliver *Oracles*, since *Eusebius* says, that they were Prophets belonging to this God. *Theotechnus*, upon this Account got so great Credit, that *Maximin* made him Governour of all

all the Province. But *Licinius* coming to *Antioch*, and suspecting the Imposture, caused the Priests and Prophets of this new *Jupiter*, to be tortured with the Rack; hereupon they confessed all, and both they and their Accomplices were put to a cruel Death, their Master *Theotechnus* suffering first. The same *Eusebius*, in the fourth Book of his Evangelical Preparations, says, that in his time, the most famous Prophets amongst the Pagans, and their most celebrated Divines, of whom some were Magistrates of their Cities, were compelled by Torments to discover the very Particulars of all the Cheats of the *Oracles*. If we were now to make out what the old Christians believed of them, all these Passages of *Eusebius*, in my Opinion, would decied the Question. They admitted *Dæmons* indeed in a certain general System, which served for their Disputes; but when they came to particular matters of Fact, they spoke little of them, or rather directly denied them.

I cannot believe, that we need any better Witnesses against the *Dæmons*, than the Pagan Priests themselves, by whose Confessions, the thing seems to me to be clearly made out. I will only therefore add one Chapter about their Lots; not to discover the Imposture of them, for that is comprehended in what we have already said of *Oracles* in general; and besides it will be sufficiently apparent of its self; but that I may not omit a Species of *Oracles* very famous in Antiquity.

CHAP.

Chap. XVIII.

Of Lots.

Lots are the Effects of Chance, and, as it were, the *Oracles* of Fortune, by which she decides all things: and they are the Instruments we make use of, to know what this Decision is.

These Lots for the most part were a kind of Dice, whereon were ingraven certain Characters, or Words, the Explication of which was to be sought for, in Tables made for that purpose. The manner of using these Lots was various: In some Temples they cast them out of their Hands, in others they threw them out of an Urn; from whence comes this Proverb so common with the Greeks, *The Lot is cast.*

The Game of Chance was always ushered in by Sacrifices, and abundance of Ceremonies. The Priest, as 'tis probable, knew how to manage the Dice; but if they would not take that pains, they might e'en let 'em run as they would, since they were always Masters of the Explanation.

* The Lacedæmonians went one Day to consult the Lots of *Dodona*, upon a War that they were undertaking; for besides the speaking Oake, the Doves, the Basons, and the *Oracles*, there were also Lots of *Dodona*. After the Ceremonies were past, just as they were going to cast the Lots, with a great deal of Respect and Veneration,

* *Cicero de Divin. lib.* 1.

neration, a Monkey of the King of *Molossi*, being got into the Temple, threw down the Lots and the Urn; upon this the frighted Prieſtess told the Lacedæmonians that they ought not to think of conquering, but only how to ſave themſelves. And all the Writers aſſure us, that the Lacedæmonians never received a more unlucky Preſage.

The moſt famous Lots of all, were thoſe of *Praneſte* and *Antium*, two little Towns in *Italy*: At *Antium*, there were wonderful Statues that moved of themſelves, (according to the Teſtimony of *Macrobius*, Book 1. Chap. 23.) whoſe different Motions, either ſerved for Anſwers, or declared whether it was fitting to conſult the Lots, or not.

And there is a Paſſage in *Cicero's* Second Book of Divination, which tells us, that they conſulted the Lots of *Praneſte*, with the Conſent of Fortune; which implies that the Statue of Fortune could nod with its Head, or give ſome other Signs of its Will and Pleaſure.

We find alſo, that there were other Statues, which had this very ſame Faculty: *Diodorus Siculus* and *Quintus Curtius* ſay, that *Jupiter Hammon* was carried by fourſcore Prieſts, in a kind of golden Chair of State, covered with a rich Canopy, from which hung abundance of ſilver Cups that made a jangling Noiſe, and that he was followed by a great Number of Women and Maids, who ſung Hymns in the Language of their Country; And that this God, by ſome Motions or Signs that he made, inſtructed the Prieſts that carried him, which way he would have them go.

The

The God of *Heliopolis* in *Syria*, according to *Macrobius*, did as much: All the Difference was, that he would be carried by Men of the best Quality in the Province, and such as had a long time liv'd in perfect Continence, and had their Heads shaved.

Lucian, in his Treatise of the Goddess of *Syria*, says, that he once saw a much more miraculous sort of *Apollo*, who, being carried on the shoulders of his Priests, took a fancy to leave them in the lurch below on the Earth, and to take a Walk by himself in the Skies. And that all this should be done in the sight of such a kind of Man as *Lucian*, is no small Wonder.

But I am so tired with discovering the Cheats of these Pagan Priests, (and am perswaded, my Reader is as weary of it as I am my self) that I will not spend any time in considering how it was, that they made their Puppets dance, and play'd all their juggling Tricks.

In the East, the Lots were Arrows, and to this Day the Turks and Arabians make use of them in the same manner. The Prophet *Ezekiel* says, that *Nebucadonosor* mingled his Arrows against *Ammon* and *Hierusalem*, and the Predicting Arrow flew towards *Hierusalem*; which decided the Question, against which People he should make War.

In *Greece* and *Italy*, they often drew the Lot from some famous Poet, as *Homer* or *Euripides*: And what first represented it self at the opening of the Book, was looked upon to be the Decree of Heaven. And History furnishes us with a thousand Examples of this kind.

'Tis

'Tis evident, that about two hundred Years after the Death of *Virgil*, they set a great Value on his Verses, and began to believe them Prophetick, and to use them instead of the ancient Lots of *Praneste*. * *Alexander Severus*, in particular, (at a time, when *Heliogabalus* was not much his Friend) received this Answer in the Temple of *Praneste* out of *Virgil*,

* *Lampridius.*

——*Si qua fata aspera rumpas,*
Tu Marcellus eris.

If you can vanquish Destiny,
The Great Marcellus *you shall be.*

Here my Author remembers, that *Rabelais* mentions the Virgilian Lot, which *Panurge* consulted concerning his Marriage: And he judges that Place of the Book, as learned, as 'tis agreeable and full of fancy; he says, that the Whimsies and Follies of *Rabelais* are many times more to be esteemed, than the most serious Discourses of others. I would not forget this Elogy, because 'tis a thing very singular to meet with, in the midst of a Treatise of *Oracles* that is full of Knowledge and Erudition. 'Tis certain that *Rabelais* had a great deal of Wit and Reading, and a particular Art of Writing of Learned Things in a frolick and jesting Way, and of relating a thousand ridiculous and fantastical Stories, without being tiresome to his Reader. And 'tis a Misfortune that he liv'd not in an Age that would have oblig'd him to a Style more Gentleman-like and Inoffensive.

These

These Lots were afterwards in use among Christians; who consulted the Holy Scriptures for that purpose, as the Pagans did their Poets. St. *Augustin*, in his 119th Epistle to *Januarius*, appears not wholly to disapprove it, unless it be done for some wicked or vain end. *Gregory* of *Tours* tells us himself what his Practice was: He pass'd seven days in Fasting and Prayer, afterwards he went to the Tomb of St. *Martin*, where he opened some Book of the Scripture as his Fancy led him, and took for the Answer of God, the first Passage which offer'd its self to his view; and if this Passage made nothing for his Purpose, then he opened the Bible in another place.

Others took the first thing they heard sung when they enter'd into the Church, for a Divine Presage.

But who would believe that the Emperor * *Heraclius*, deliberating in what place he should Winter his Army, should determine it by this kind of Lot? He purify'd his Army during three Days, and afterwards open'd the Book of the Evangelists, and there found that *Albany* was mark'd out for his Winter-quarters. Was that an Affair of which a Man could reasonably hope for a decision in the Scriptures? *Cedrenus.

At last indeed the Church has quite banished this Superstition, but it took up a great deal of time first: For when once our Minds are possess'd with an Error, 'tis a wonder if ever we will be undeceiv'd.

The End of the First Discourse.

The Second Diſcourſe,

That Oracles did not ceaſe at the coming of Jeſus Chriſt.

THe greateſt Difficulty that regards *Oracles* is now ſurmounted, ſince we have proved, that *Dæmons* were not at all concerned in them. And if this be true, then *Oracles* ſignifie ſo little to the Chriſtian Religion, that there will be no neceſſity to maintain, that they ceaſed preciſely at the coming of Jeſus Chriſt.

CHAP.

Chap. I.

The Weakneſs of thoſe Reaſons upon which the Opinion, that Oracles *ceaſed at the coming of Jeſus Chriſt, is founded.*

THat which made moſt Men believe that *Oracles* ceas'd at the coming of Jeſus Chriſt, was the Prediction of *Oracles* themſelves, which foretold their own Silence, and the Confeſſion of the Heathens that liv'd about the time of Jeſus Chriſt, who often ſpeak of their Ceſſation.

We have already ſhewn the Falſity of theſe pretended *Oracles*, in which a *Dæmon* that was ſtruck dumb, ſaid himſelf that he was ſtruck dumb; but theſe *Dæmons* were either feign'd by the over-great Zeal of the Chriſtians, or too eaſily receiv'd by their Credulity.

I will recite one of thoſe *Oracles* upon which *Euſebius* ſupports his Opinion, that they did ceaſe at the Birth of Jeſus Chriſt. 'Tis taken from *Porphyrus*; and *Euſebius* never fails of making all the advantage he can of the Teſtimony of this Enemy.

I will declare to you the truth concerning the Oracles *of* Delphos *and* Claros, (ſaid *Apollo* to his Prieſts) *In times paſt there came from the Boſom of the Earth an Infinity of* Oracles *and* Fountains, *and* Exhalations, *which inſpir'd People with Divine Furies; which the Earth, by the continual*

Changes which Time makes in it, has reimbibed and caus'd to enter into its self, all those Fountains, Exhalations *and* Oracles: *and there remains now no more but the Waters of* Mycale *in the* Didymean *Fields, and the* Oracles *of* Claros *and* Parnassus.

Upon this, *Eusebius* concludes in general, that all *Oracles* were then come to an end.

But 'tis certain that three of 'em at least are to be excepted, according to this *Oracle* which he reports himself: But he takes notice only of those words that make for his purpose, and troubles not himself with the rest.

But besides, does this *Oracle* of *Porphyrius* tell us, when the other *Oracles* ceas'd? not at all; tho' *Eusebius* will by all means have it understood to be at the time of the coming of Jesus Christ. We may commend his Zeal, but his manner of Arguing does not at all deserve our Praise.

Nay suppose that *Porphyrius*'s *Oracle* did speak of the coming of Jesus Christ, would it follow therefore that all *Oracles* then ceas'd, and that none remain'd? *Eusebius* perhaps imagin'd that this Exception signified little, and that it is sufficient if the greatest part of the *Oracles* did then cease; but he is mistaken, for if *Oracles* had been deliver'd by *Dæmons*, who by the Birth of Jusus Christ were condemn'd to eternal silence, then no *Dæmon* would have been excepted, or privileged. So that if there was but one *Dæmon* remaining after the Birth of Jesus Christ, it would be sufficient to prove that it was not His Birth that imposed a perpetual silence upon *Oracles*. This is one of those

those Cases, where the least Exception ruins the general Proposition.

But you may say perhaps, that *Dæmons* at the Birth of Jesus Christ did cease to deliver *Oracles*; but that yet *Oracles* continued still for all that, because the Priests counterfeited them.

This Supposition is without any foundation; for I can prove that *Oracles* continued four hundred Years after the Death of Christ, and there is no mention any where made of the least difference observ'd between those that were delivered after the Birth of Jesus, and those that were pronounced before it. And besides, if the Priests could so dextrously put the cheat upon People during the space of four hundred Years, why could they not continue to do it longer?

Of all the Pagan Authors that are in request with those who would make us believe that *Oracles* ceas'd at the coming of Jesus Christ, *Plutarch* is the chief: He lived some hundreds of Years after Christ, and has written a Dialogue concerning the Cessation of *Oracles*. Many Men upon his Authority only, have taken up their Opinions, and espoused their Party; and yet *Plutarch* positively excepts the *Oracle* of *Libadia*, (that is to say, of *Trophonius*) and of *Delphos*: where, as he says, anciently there was Imployment enough for two Priests, and sometimes for three, but in his Days one served the turn.

Besides, he confesses, that the *Oracles* were fallen to decay in *Bœotia*, a Country, which had formerly been famous for producing a great number of them.

All this, 'tis true, proves the Ceſſation of ſome *Oracles*, and the Diminution of the Credit of others; but not the intire Ceſſation of all, which however there is an abſolute neceſſity for thoſe to prove, who maintain the common Opinion.

The *Oracle* of *Delphos* was not ſo mightily decay'd in *Plutarch*'s time; for he himſelf tells us in another Treatiſe, that the Temple of *Delphos* was then far more magnificent than ever it had been; that they had repaired the ancient Buildings which Time began to ruin, and that they had added others to it, which were altogether after the modern Mode; that there was a ſmall Town near *Delphos*, which increas'd daily by little and little, and had its Nouriſhment from the old City, like a little Tree that ſprings from the Foot of a great one; and that this little Town was become more conſiderable than it had been for a thouſand Years paſt. But even in this Dialogue, which treats of the Ceſſation of *Oracles*, *Demetrius* the Cicilian, one of the Interlocutors, ſays, that before he began his Voyage, the *Oracles* of *Amphilochus* and *Mopſus* were as flouriſhing as ever; but that ſince he came from thence he knew not how things ſtood with 'em. You ſee then what is to be found in favour of the Ceſſation of *Oracles* at the coming of Chriſt in this Treatiſe of *Plutarch*, to which a multitude of learned Men referr you for the Proof of it.

Here my Author pretends, that we are alſo fallen into a groſs Miſtake, concerning a Paſſage in the ſecond Book of Divinations: Where

Cicero

Cicero laughs at the *Oracle*, that was delivered by *Apollo* in Latin to *Pyrrhus*, who consulted him concerning the War he was going to make againſt the Romans. This *Oracle* had a double Meaning, ſo that it could not be underſtood, whether *Pyrrhus* ſhould overcome the Romans, or the Romans overcome *Pyrrhus*. The Equivocation is ſo peculiar to the Latin Phraſe, that one cannot well render it into Engliſh; for my part, I cannot tranſlate it better than thus:

I do pronounce, that Rome
Pyrrhus *ſhall overcome.*

But the Words of *Cicero*, concerning this *Oracle*, are theſe that follow:

In the firſt place, (ſays he) Apollo *never ſpoke Latin. In the ſecond place, The Greeks knew nothing of this* Oracle. *Thirdly*, Apollo *in the time of* Pyrrhus *had left off Rhiming. In fine, Altho' the* Æacides *(from which Family* Pyrrhus *was deſcended) were far from being Men of a fine Judgment, or of a piercing Wit, yet the Equivocation of the* Oracle *was ſo manifeſt, that* Pyrrhus *could not chuſe but perceive it. But why is it ſo long ſince any* Oracles *were delivered in this kind at* Delphos? *For this Reaſon it is, that now-a-days nothing is more deſpiſed than they are.*

It is on theſe laſt Words, that the Opinion is grounded, that *Oracles* were not delivered at *Delphos* in the time of *Cicero*.

But my Author ſays, that they are deceived, who think ſo, and that theſe Words, *Why are there no more* Oracles *delivered in this kind at* Del-

phos? plainly ſhew, that *Cicero* ſpeaks only of *Oracles* in Verſe; ſince he is diſcourſing in that place about one wrapp'd up in an Hexameter.

But I know not whether we ought to be altogether of my Author's Opinion; for obſerve how *Cicero* goes on: *When the Defenders of* Oracles *are hard put to it, they anſwer, That this Vertue in the Exhalation of the Earth, which inſpired the Pythian Prieſteſs, is evaporated with length of time. One would think, that they were talking of ſome Wine that was grown flat, and that had loſt its Spirits; for what time can conſume or dry up a Vertue all Divine? And what can be more Divine than an Exhalation from the Earth, which works ſuch an Effect upon the Soul, as to give it both the Knowledge of Futurity, and the Power to Expreſs it ſelf in Verſe.*

It ſeems to me, that *Cicero* means, that the whole Vertue was intirely loſt: Whereas he he would have acknowledged, that a good part of it had remained, if *Oracles* were ſtill delivered at *Delphos*, tho' but in Proſe. For no Man will ſay, that a Prophecy is nothing at all, unleſs it be in Verſe?

I do not think, that they are ſo mightily miſtaken, who take this Paſſage for an abſolute Proof of the entire Ceſſation of *Oracles* at *Delphos*; but they do ill, who pretend to draw any Argument from thence, for attributing this Ceſſation to the Birth of Jeſus Chriſt. For the *Oracle* ceaſed too ſoon for that, ſince it appears by this very Paſſage, that it ceaſed a long time before *Cicero*.

But

But for all this, the thing was not in truth as *Cicero* ſeems to underſtand it in this place; for he himſelf, in his firſt Book of Divinations, makes his Brother *Quintus*, who ſtands up for *Oracles*, to ſpeak in this manner: *I rely upon this Point, that the* Oracle *of* Delphos *had never been ſo famous, and had never received ſo many Offerings from Kings and all ſorts of People, if the Truth of its Predictions had not been acknowledged. Now indeed it is not ſo famous, becauſe its Predictions are leſs true: And ſo, on the other ſide, if they had not been once extremely true, it would never have been ſo mighty famous heretofore as it was.* But (which is yet a ſtronger Proof) *Cicero* himſelf (as *Plutarch* relates in his Life) did in his Youth conſult the *Oracle* of *Delphos*, concerning the Conduct he ought to keep in the World: And 'twas anſwered him, That he ſhould follow his *Genius*, rather than conform himſelf to the Opinion of the Vulgar. Now if it were not true, that *Cicero* conſulted the *Oracle* of *Delphos*, yet, at leaſt, this Story obliges us to grant, that in the time of *Cicero*, it was conſulted.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Why the ancient Authors contradicted each other, very often, about the time of the Ceſſation of Oracles.

PErhaps it may be objected, How comes it to paſs then, that in the fifth Book of *Lucan*'s *Phaſalia*, we find this Account of the *Oracle* of *Delphos*? *The* Oracle *of* Delphos, *which has been ſilent ever ſince great Men were afraid of what was to come to paſs, and forbid that the Gods ſhould declare it, is the moſt conſiderable of all thoſe Favours of Heaven, which our Age has loſt.*

And a little after, Appius, *who was deſirous to know the Deſtiny of* Italy, *had the Boldneſs, to go and interrogate this Cavern, that had been mute ſo long; and to move the* Tripos, *that had been ſo long undiſturbed.* And that *Juvenal* ſays in a certain place, *Sence the* Oracles *ſpeak no more at* Delphos——

In fine, Whence comes it, that among the Authors of the ſame Age, we find ſome, who ſay, the *Oracle* of *Delphos* ſpeaks no more; and others that ſay, he ſpeaks ſtill? And whence comes it, that the ſame Author ſometimes contradicts himſelf ſo often upon this Subject?

The Reaſon moſt certainly is, becauſe *Oracles* were neither in their ancient Reputation, nor yet were they abſolutely ruined: So that one may well ſay, that, in compariſon of what they

they had formerly been, they were nothing; but yet, for all that, they continued to be something still.

Besides, some *Oracles* were ruined for a certain time, and afterwards came into credit again; for *Oracles* were subject to several Adventures and Misfortunes: And we ought not to believe them annihilated from the time of their being mute; for they might afterwards assume a Voice again and speak.

Plutarch says, that in old time a Dragon came and lodg'd upon *Parnassus*, and caus'd the Delphick *Oracle* to be deserted, and that it was commonly believ'd, that Solitude invited the Dragon to that place; but that 'twas more probable, that he caus'd the Solitude, *Greece* being fill'd with Cities, *&c.*

You see that *Plutarch* speaks of a time very far distant back. So the *Oracle* had since its erection been once abandon'd already, and we are sure, that afterwards it was very well re-establish'd. But, after this, the Temple of *Delphos* underwent divers Misfortunes: It was plundered by a Thief descended from *Phlegias*, by the Army of *Xerxes*, by the *Phocenses*, by *Pyrrhus*, by *Nero*; and last of all, by the Christians under *Constantine*. All this did no great good to the *Oracle*, for the Priests were either massacred, or dispers'd, the Place was abandon'd, the Sacred Utensils were lost, and it must of necessity require great Charges, Care, and Time, to rig out these *Oracles* again fit for Holy Use.

All this then may be possible, that *Cicero* in his Youth consulted the *Oracle* of *Delphos*, that during

during the War between *Caſar* and *Pompey*, and in that general Diſorder of the Univerſe, the *Oracle* was mute, as *Lucan* will have it; and that after the end of this War, when *Cicero* writ his Book of Philoſophy, it might begin to be re-eſtabliſhed ſo much, as to make *Quintus* ſay it was ſtill in the World; and yet ſo little, that *Cicero* might ſuppoſe that it was not in being.

When *Dorimachus*, as *Polibius* reports, had burnt the *Portico* of the Temple of *Dodona*, had quite deſtroy'd the Sacred Place of the *Oracle*, and had pillag'd or ruin'd all the Offerings, an Author of that time might very well ſay, that the *Oracle* of *Dodona* ſpoke no more. But for all this, in the following Age, another Author might be found tranſmitting to Poſterity ſome of the Anſwers which it gave in his time.

CHAP. III.

The Hiſtory of the Duration of the Oracle *of* Delphos, *and ſome ancient* Oracles.

WE cannot better prove, that about the time of Jeſus Chriſt, to which the ſilence of the Delphick *Oracle* is ſo uſually referr'd, it did not altogether ceaſe, but was only interrupted, than by ſetting down all the different Occaſions that we find it took of ſpeaking ſince.

Sue-

Suetonius in the Life of *Nero* says, that he, consulting the *Oracle* of *Delphos*, was warn'd to have a care of seventy three Years; and that thereupon *Nero* believ'd, he should not die till that Age, and never thought of old *Galba*, who being seventy three Years old took his Empire from him: For he was so conceited of his long Life and good Fortune, that having lost in a Ship-wrack things of a very great value, he bragg'd that the Fishes would bring 'em back to him again.

But certainly *Nero* either receiv'd from the *Oracle* of *Delphos* some other Answer that seem'd less favourable to him, or was discontented that he was destin'd to live no longer than seventy three Years, or else he would never have took from the Priests of *Delphos* the *Cirrhæan* Fields, to give them to his Soldiers. He also took from the Temple more than five hundred Statues, some of Men, and, some of Gods, but all of Brass; and to prophane or for ever abolish the *Oracle*, he caus'd several Mens Throats to be cut at the very Mouth of the Sacred Cavern, where the Divine exhalation issued forth.

Dion Cassius. Pausanias.

That the *Oracle* after such an Adventure as this, should be mute till the Reign of *Domitian*, and, as *Juvenal* says, should speak no more, is not at all to be wonder'd at.

And yet 'tis impossible it could be altogether mute from the time of *Nero* to that of *Domitian*; for observe what *Philostratus* says in the Life of *Apollonius Tyanæus*, who came to the Court of *Domitian*: Apollonius *visited all the* Oracles *of* Greece, *that of* Dodona, *that of* Del-

Delphos, *and that of* Amphiaraus. And in another place he speaks yet farther: *You may see* Apollo *of* Delphos *made illustrious by the* Oracles *which he delivers in the midst of* Greece; *he answers those who consult him, as you know very well your self, in very few words, and without accompanying his Answers with Prodigies; altho' it were very easie for him to make* Parnassus *tremble, to stop the Course of* Cephisus, *and to change the Waters of* Castalia *into Wine; but he tells the truth plainly, and does not amuse himself to make an unprofitable shew of his Power.* 'Tis very pleasant that *Philostratus* should expect to have the greater Value set upon this *Apollo*, because he was no great Worker of Miracles. But I think there lurks in this place some secret Poison against the Christians.

We formerly acquainted you, that in the time of *Plutarch*, who lived under *Trajan*, this *Oracle* was yet in being, but reduc'd to one single Priestess, tho' in elder times it had two or three. Under *Adrian*, *Dion Chrysostom* says, that he consulted the *Oracle* of *Delphos*, and relates one of its Answers, which seem'd to him to be very intricate, and which was so indeed.

Under the *Antonini*, *Lucian* says, that a Priest of *Tyana*, went to demand of the false Prophet *Alexander*, if the *Oracles* that were deliver'd then at *Didymi*, at *Claros*, and at *Delphos*, were indeed the Answers of *Apollo*, or Impostures. *Alexander*, who had a regard for these *Oracles*, which were so like his own, answered the Priest, that it was a Secret not fit for him to know. But when this wise Priest demanded what he should be after his Death, he was answered, boldly,

boldly, *Thou shalt be a* Camel, *then a* Horse, *then a* Philosopher, *and at last a* Prophet *as great as* Alexander.

After the *Antonini*, three Emperors disputed the Empire, *Severus Septimus*, *Pescennius Niger*, and *Clodius Albinus*. Delphos *was consulted*, says *Spartianus*, *to know which would be best for the Commonwealth*; *and the* Oracle *answered in Verse*, *The Black is the best*, *the African is good*, *but the White is the worst of all*. By the Black was meant *Pescennius Niger*; by the *African*, *Severus Septimus*, who was of *Africa*; and by the *White*, *Clodius Albinus*. It was ask'd afterwards, *Who should remain Master of the Empire*; and it was answer'd, *The Blood of the White and the Black shall be spilt*, *and the African shall govern the World*. Then it was demanded, *How long time he should govern?* and it was answered, *He shall ride on the Sea of* Italy *with twenty Ships*, *though with one Ship he may cross the Sea*. By which it is meant that *Severus* should reign twenty Years. Here the *Oracle* reserv'd to it self an obscure Meaning, to have recourse to in time of need. But yet in the times when *Delphos* was most flourishing, there were never better or more substantial *Oracles* than these.

We find nevertheless, that *Clemens Alexandrinus*, in his Exhortations to the Gentiles, which he composed, either under *Severus*, or about that time, says very plainly, that the Fountain of *Castalia*, which belonged to the *Oracle* of *Delphos*, and that of *Colophon* and all the other Prophetick Fountains, had at last, tho' it were late first, lost their fabulous Vertues.

Per-

Perhaps in that time, these *Oracles* were fallen into one of those Silences, to which they were so subject by Intervals: Or perhaps, because they were no more in Reputation, *Clemens Alexandrinus* thought fit to say, they were totally silenced.

'Tis certain, that under *Constantius*, the Father of *Constantine*, and during the Youth of *Constantine*, *Delphos* was not yet ruined; since *Eusebius* writes in the Life of *Constantine*, that he said that there was then a Report, that *Apollo* had delivered an *Oracle*, not by the Mouth of a Priestess, but from the bottom of the obscure Cavern, which said--- *That the Just Men, who were upon Earth, were the cause that he could not speak truth.* A very pleasant Reason this! Besides, the *Oracle* of *Delphos* must then necessarily be in a very miserable condition, since it could not maintain one Priestess.

But this *Oracle* received a terrible Blow under *Constantine*, who commanded, or suffered, that *Delphos* should be pillaged. *Then*, says *Eusebius* in the Life of *Constantine*, *they produced in the open View of all the People, in the Publick Places of* Constantinople, *those Statues which the Errors of Men had caused to be so long time the Object of Veneration and Worship*; *here* Apollo Pythius, *there* Sminthius: *The* Tripodes *were exposed in the* Circus, *and the* Heliconian Muses *in the Palace, to the Railleries of all the World.*

But after all this, the *Oracle* of *Delphos* came into credit once again; for the Emperor * *Julian* sent to enquire of it, about the Expedition, that he was designing against the Persians. If the *Oracle* of *Delphos* did con-

* *Theodoret.*

continue any longer, we cannot however extend its History farther; for there is no more spoken of it in any Author. But in all likelihood, that was the very time, when it became silent, and its last Words were addressed to the Emperor *Julian*, who was so zealous for Paganism. I cannot therefore well understand, how some great Men could put *Augustus* in the place of *Julian*, and boldly affirm, that the *Oracle* of *Delphos* ended with the Answer it delivered to *Augustus*, concerning the Hebrew Infant. Some * modern Authors, who thought *Oracles* worthy of a glorious End, since they made so great a Noise in the World, have contrived one very fit, to give them a Reputation. They found in *Sozomenus* and *Theodoretus*, that in the time of *Julian*, the Temple of *Apollo*, which was in the Suburbs of *Antioch*, called *Daphne*, was set on fire, no Body being able to discover the Author, or Cause of it; but the Pagans accused the Christians of this Conflagration, and the Christians attributed it to Thunder and Lightning thrown by the Hand of God. *Theodoretus* indeed says, That the Lightning fell upon this Temple, but *Sozomenus* says nothing at all of it. Now these modern Authors had a mind to transplant this Accident to the Temple of *Delphos*, which was indeed far distant from thence. And so they write, that by the just Vengeance of God, it was destroyed by Lightning, accompanied with a mighty Earth-quake. But there is no mention made of this great Trembling of the Earth, neither by *Sozomenus*, nor *Theodoret*, in

* *Melanchon. P. Power. Boissard Hospin.*

their Relation of the Fire of *Daphne*; though others added it, to keep the Thunder company, and to heighten the Prodigiousness of the Accident.

But it would be a very troublesome thing to give you a History of the Duration of all the *Oracles*, after the Birth of Jesus Christ. It is sufficient to consider in what time we find that some of the principal Ones spoke their last. But you must always remember, that it is not understood, that this was the very last Time they spoke, but that it was the last Occasion Authors had to tell us that they spoke.

Dion, who did not finish his History, till the Eighth Year of *Alexander Severus*, that is, the 230th Year of Jesus Christ, says, that in his time *Amphilochus* delivered *Oracles* in Dreams: He tells us also, that there was in the City of *Apollonia* an *Oracle*, where things to come were foretold, by observing the Manner how the Fire took hold of the Incense that was cast upon the Altar. But it was not permitted to ask this *Oracle* any Questions concerning Death or Marriage. These peevish Restrictions were sometimes founded upon the particular History of the God, who in his Lifetime perhaps had an Occasion given him of taking an Aversion to certain things: Though I am also of Opinion, that they might sometimes come from the ill Success, which those Answers had, that were delivered by the *Oracle*, concerning some particular Matters.

* *Zosimus.* * Under *Aurelius*, towards the Year of Christ 272, the Palmyrenians being revolted, consulted the *Oracle* of *Apollo*

Apollo Sarpedonius in *Cilicia*. They consulted likewise that of *Venus* of *Apacha*; the Form of which was so very singular, that it deserves to be mentioned here. *Apacha*, is a Place between *Heliopolis* and *Biblus*. Near the Temple of *Venus* is a Lake like a Cittern: And at certain Assemblies, that are held there at some particular Seasons, there is to be seen a Fire in the Form of a Globe of Lamps: *And this Fire*, says *Zosimus*, *has continued to be seen even in our Days*, that is to say, about the 400 Year of Jesus Christ. Those that offer, throw into the Lake the Present designed for the Goddess, of what sort soever they be; if she receives them, they sink to the bottom; if she receives them not, they swim on the Surface of the Water, though they be of Silver or Gold. In the Year before the Ruin of the Palmyrenians, their Presents sunk to the bottom, but the Year following every thing swam on the top.

* *Licinius*, having a Design to renew his War with *Constantine*, consulted the *Oracle* of *Apollo Didymæus*, and had for Answer two Verses of *Homer*, of which this is the Sence: *Unhappy old Man! It is not for thee to fight against young Men; thou hast not Strength enough left, for old Age pulls thee down.* * *Zosim.*

* A God, of no great Reputation, named *Besas*, delivered *Oracles* in Answer to Letters at *Abydum*, a Town in the Confines of *Thebais*, under the Empire of *Constantius*. For there were sent to this Emperor certain Letters, which had been left upon the Altar, in the Temple of *Besas*; upon which he began to make a very * *Ammian. Marcellinus.*

rigorous Prosecution against those who had laid those Letters there; and cast into Prison, or sent to Banishment a great number of Persons, or else caused them to be cruelly tormented: Because by these Letters, they enquired after the Fate of the Empire, or concerning the Duration of the Reign of *Constantius*, or the Success of some Designs, which they were framing against him.

In fine, *Macrobius*, who lived under *Arcadius* and *Honorius*, Sons of *Theodosius*, speaks of the God of *Heliopolis* in *Syria*, and of his *Oracle*, and of the Lots of *Antium*, in Terms which positively prove that they were all remaining in his time.

But here we must observe, that it is of no absolute Necessity to our Design, that all these Histories should be true, or that these *Oracles* did really deliver those very Answers which are attributed to 'em; for the very counterfeiting of Answers, implies that the *Oracles* were in being when those Answers were pretended to be delivered by them; and 'tis most plain by the Histories, which so many Authors have written of 'em, that they did not believe that they were wholly silenc'd in their Days.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

That Oracles *for the most part were abolish'd at the same time with Heathenism.*

Oracles for the most part ceas'd when Heathenism was abolish'd, which was not immediately after the coming of Jesus Christ. For *Constantine* himself demolished but a few Temples, and he was fain to make the horrid Crimes that were perpetrated there, his Pretence for pulling 'em down. On this Pretext he plucked down the Temple of * *Venus Aphacitis*, and that of † *Æsculapius* of *Ægæ* in *Cicilia*, in both of which there were *Oracles*. But yet he * prohibited Sacrificing to the Heathen Gods, and by that Edict began to make their Temples of no use. The Edicts of *Constantius* and of *Julian* (when *Constantius* had but newly declared him *Cæsar*) are still extant, wherein on pain of Death they forbid all sorts of Divination, not only Astrology, Interpretation of Dreams and Magick, but also foretelling by the flights of Birds, and by the entrails of Beasts; which gave a mighty shock to the Religion of the *Romans*. And indeed the Emperours had a particular Interest in prohibiting all kinds of Fortune-telling, because one or other was always inquiring about their Destiny, and especially to know who was to be the next Successor, who usually, upon the flat-

* *Zosimus.*
† *Eusebius.*
* *Theodoretus.*

tery of the Diviner, made a Revolt, and set up his own Claim to the Empire.

As there were many *Oracles* remaining, when *Julian* was proclaim'd Emperour, so he apply'd himself, as much as he could, to the Restauration of those that had been destroyed. For Example, That of the Suburbs of *Daphne* was destroyed by *Adrian*, * who when he was a private Man, having dipt a Leaf in the Castalian Spring, (for there was one of this Name at *Daphne* as well as at *Delphos*,) found when he took it out of the Water, a Narrative of what was to befal him, and Advice to think of obtaining the Empire. And therefore when he was afterwards made Emperour, lest the same *Oracle* should give the like Counsel to some Body else, he caus'd the sacred Spring to be choak'd up, by throwing a great quantity of Stones into it. There was a great deal of Ingratitude in this Procedure; but *Julian* * caus'd the Spring to be opened, the dead Bodies, which were buried near it, to be removed, and the place to be purified in the same manner as the Athenians had in former time purged the Island of *Delos*. But *Julian* went farther, and would needs be himself the Prophet of the Didymæan *Oracle*; for this he thought would be a means of bringing Prophecies into Credit again, which then lay under much Contempt. As he was Emperour he was (*Pontifex Maximus*, or) chiefest Priest; and tho' the Emperours had not been accustomed to make any great use of this Sacerdotal Dignity; yet he was resolved to make it more than an emp-

* *Sozomen.*

* Ammianus Marcellinus.

empty Title: And therefore we see that, in one of those Letters of his, which are come to our view, in the Quality of *Pontifex Maximus* he suspends a Pagan Priest for three Years from the exercise of his Sacred Function. And the Letter, which he wrote to *Arsaces*, *Pontifex* of *Galatia*, acquaints us with the Way which he took to make Paganism flourish again: He congratulates in the first place his own Felicity, in that his Zeal had produced such great Effects in so short a time; and then he declares his Judgment to be, that the best means for the re-establishment of Heathenism, would be, to transplant the Vertues of Christianity into it, such as Charity towards Strangers, the Care of Burying the Dead decently, and that Sanctity of Life which the Christians, as he says, counterfeited so well. He therefore commands that *Pontifex* to oblige the Priests of *Galatia*, either by Arguments or Threats, to live regularly, to abstain from the publick Shows and Tipling-houses; to quit all sordid and infamous Imployments, to addict themselves, with all their Family, only to the Service of the Gods, and to have a watchful Eye upon the Galileans, (so he scornfully calls the Christians,) and to suppress their Impieties and Profanations. He observes, that it is a great Shame, that whilst the Jews and Galileans maintain'd not only their own Poor, but such as were Heathens too, the Pagans should let their Poor starve, and not remember that Hospitality and Liberality are Vertues so peculiar and proper to 'em, that *Homer* brings in *Ennæus* speaking thus: *My Guest, if a Man of Quali-*

ty much inferiour to thine, had come hither, I must have entertain'd him; for all Men that are either Strangers or Poor come to us, as it were on an Errand from Jupiter; *and tho' I have but little to give, yet I give that little with Chearfulness.* Last of all, he sets down what Distributions he appoints to be made each Year to the Poor of *Galatia*, and he bids the *Pontifex* take care that there be Hospitals built in each Town for the reception of Men of other Religions as well as Heathens. He thinks it not befitting the Dignity of the *Pontifex* to make frequent Visits to the Governours at their Houses, but that he rather write to 'em; nor will he have Priests go meet 'em, when they come to the Temples, the Priests may go to receive 'em as far as the Porch, but no farther. He also forbids the Governours on such an occasion to have their Guards marching before them, because they are then to be considered only as private Persons; but he gives the Soldiers leave to go in after them, if they will.

With this Care, and this Imitation of Christianity, it is probable that *Julian* (if he had lived) would have put some stop to the Ruine of his Religion; but it pleased God to cut him off before he had Reigned two Years.

Jovian, who succeeded him, began to endeavour zealously the Destruction of Heathenism; but in the seven Months of his Reign it was not possible for him to make any great Progress.

Valens, who had the Eastern Empire, gave Liberty of Conscience to all Men to worship what Gods they listed, and was himself more inclin-

inclined to ſupport Arianiſm than Chriſtianity. * So that during his Reign Sacrifices were publickly made, and Men eat the fleſh of the Victims offered up to Idols. The Bacchanalian Myſteries were celebrated openly; they run up and down with their Thyrſi in their Hands; they tore Dogs in pieces, and committed all the other Extravagances which are ſuitable to that Devotion.

* Theod. Lib. 5.

Valentinian, his Brother, who had the Weſtern Empire, was more zealous for the Glory of Chriſtianity; but yet his Conduct was not ſo ſteady, as it ſhould have been. He had made a Law to forbid all ſorts of Nocturnal Ceremonies; whereupon *Pretextatus*, the Proconſul of *Greece*, repreſented to him, that if he took away from the Greeks thoſe Ceremonies, to which they were ſo mighty addicted, they would lead their Lives unpleaſantly. This prevailed with *Valentinian*, and he conſented, that notwithſtanding his Law, they might keep their old Cuſtoms. It is true, that we have this account from *Zoſimus* a Pagan Hiſtorian; and one may ſay, that he invented it, to make us believe that the Pagans were ſtill in ſome credit with the Emperors: But we anſwer, that *Zoſimus* conſidering the condition which his Religion was in, was more likely to have been in an humor of complaining of Severities that were not acted, than of pleaſing himſelf with the recital of a Favour that was never ſhown. But this is certain however, that there are old Inſcriptions at *Rome*, and in other Cities of *Italy*, by which it is manifeſt, that under the Reign of *Valentinian*, Perſons of great Quality celebrated the

the Sacrifices called Taurobolia and Criobolia, that is to say, The sprinkling of Bulls Blood and Rams Blood. Nay, by the great number of those Inscriptions one would be made to think that those Ceremonies were the principal ones in fashion, during the time of this *Valentinian*, and the two other Emperors of the same Name.

Now they being the oddest and most singular of all the Heathen Rites, I suppose that a Description of 'em will not be irksome to the Reader. *Prudentius*, who perhaps had seen them, sets 'em down at length: There was a deep Pit digged, into which the Person, for whom the Ceremonies were performed, descended with Sacred Ribons and a Crown upon his Head, and in a Dress altogether Mysterious: Over the Pit they placed a Covering made of Planks pierced through with a great many Holes: Upon the Covering they brought a Bull adorned with a Garland of Flowers and little Plates of Gold hanging upon his Horns and Forehead. Then his throat was Cut with a Sacred Knife, and his Blood dropt down through the holes that were in the Planks into the Pit, whilest the Person that stood there received it with much Devotion, catching it on his Forehead, his Cheeks, his Arms, his Shoulders, and every part of his Body, and being industrious that not one drop should fall any where but on himself. At last out he came, a frightful Spectacle, all daub'd with Blood, and his Hair, Beard and Cloaths still dropping with it; but his Comfort was, that his Sins were all wash'd away, and he was regenerated to all Eter-

Eternity: For, as it appears by the Inscription, this Sacrifice was to those who celebrated it, a Mystical and Eternal Regeneration. But unless it were renewed once in twenty Years, it would lose its Force, and the Perpetuity of its Duration. And Women, as well as Men, were capable of this Regeneration; and those, who were not at the Ceremony, might receive the Benefit of it by Association: Nay, which is most remarkable of all, whole Cities sometimes performed it by Proxy or Deputation. This Sacrifice was now and then made for the Emperor's Health: And the Provinces made their Court to him by sending some Persons in their Name to bedawb himself with Bulls-blood, for the obtaining of a long and happy Life for the Emperor. All this may be proved out of the old Inscriptions.

But now we come to *Theodosius* and his Sons, who put a full Period to Pagan Superstitions.

Theodosius began first in *Egypt*, where he caused all the Temples to be shut up: At last he went so far as to demolish the Temple of *Serapis*, which was the most famous of 'em all. And as *Strabo* informs us, there was nothing more Glorious in the whole Heathen Religion than the Pilgrimages which were made to *Serapis*: *When the time*, says he, *of certain Festivals was near at Hand, it is hard to believe what a multitude of People went down the River from* Alexandria *to* Canopus, *where this Temple stood. Day and Night there was nothing to be seen, but Boats full of Men and Women, Singing and Dancing with all the liberty imaginable. At* Canopus *there were a vast number of Inns on the River side, which were of use*

for

for the entertainment of the Passingers and accommodating them in their Divertisements. And therefore the Sophister *Eunapius*, who was a Pagan, seems to have had a mighty Concern for the Temple of *Serapis*, and with Gall enough he describes its Destruction: Men (*says he*) that had never heard the sound of War, shew'd themselves mighty Valiant against the Stones of this Temple, but especially against the rich Offerings, which it was full of: And in those Holy Places they put Monks, a People (*says he*) infamous and useless; who, because they wear a black and slovenly Habit, arrogate to themselves a Tyrannical Authority over the Minds of Men; and instead of those Gods which the Light of our natural Reason discovers to us, they set up for Objects of our Adoration, the Heads of Malefactors who were executed for their Crimes, which they salt to preserve 'em from Corruption. Thus does this impious Wretch treat Monks and Relicks; and certainly the Liberty of those times was very great, when such Invectives were written against the Emperor's Religion. *Russinus* informs us, that the Temple of *Serapis* was found to be full of secret Passages, and Machines contrived for the Impostures of the Priests. He tells us, amongst other things, that on the East side of the Temple there was a little Window, through which, on a certain Day of the Year, the Sun-beams entring, fell just upon the Mouth of *Serapis*: At the same time, an Image of the Sun made of Iron was brought in, which being attracted by a great Load-stone fixed in the Cieling, ascended up to the Image of *Serapis*. Then they cried out, that the Sun saluted

luted their God: But when the Iron Image fell down again, and the Sun-beams went off from *Serapis*'s Mouth, they said, that the Sun, having finished his Complement, was retired, to go about his own Affairs.

After that *Theodosius* had defeated the Rebel *Eugenius*, he went to *Rome*, where still the Senate stood up for Paganism. Their chiefest Reason was, Because, for twelve hundred Years, *Rome* had thriven well enough with its Gods, from whom it had received all sorts of Prosperity. The Emperor made a Speech in the Senate-house, perswading them to embrace the Christian Religion; but they replied, That by Custom and Experience, they had found Paganism to be a good and convenient Religion; and if they change it for that of the Christians, they could not foresee what might be the Event. Was not this fine Theology, for the Roman Senate? *Theodosius* finding, that this was not the way to deal with them, told Them, That the publick Treasury was two much exhausted by making chargeable Sacrifices, and that he had Occasion to imploy that Money in paying his Armies. They replied, That their Sacrifices would not be acceptable, unless they were made at the Charge of the Publick. But that Inconvenience was no Argument with him: So he put an end to all Sacrifices and old Ceremonies. And *Zosimus* does not let slip the Occasion of observing, that from that time forwards all sorts of Misfortunes happened to the Roman Empire.

The same Author tells us, that when *Theodosius* made that Voyage to *Rome*, *Serena*, the Wife of

of *Stilicon*, entered into the Temple of the *Mother of the Gods*, to put some Affront upon her, and that she made bold to convert to her own use a fair Neck-lace, which the Goddess wore: This an old Vestal Virgin reproved her very sharply for, and, as she went out of the Temple, followed her, cursing her with a thousand Imprecations. After which, says *Zosimus*, the poor *Serena* was often frighted (both waking and sleeping) with a certain Apparition, that threatned her with sudden Death.

But the last Efforts of Paganism were those made by *Symmachus*, to obtain of the Emperors, *Valentinian*, *Theodosius*, and *Arcadius*, the Re-establishment of the Privileges of the Vestals, and of the Altar of Victory in the Capitol; but all the World knows with what Vigour St. *Ambrose* opposed him. Yet it appears by the very Proceedings in that Contention, that *Rome* did in those Days retain a strong Tincture of Paganism. For St. *Ambrose* asks *Symmachus*, why the Pagans are not contented with having the Publick Places, Portico's and Baths filled with their Idols, and if nothing will serve their turns, unless the Altar of Victory be set up in the very Capitol, which is the Place of the whole City, whither most Christians resort? *That the Christians*, says he, *may, whether they will or no, have the Smoak of the Sacrifices blown in their Eyes, the Musick in their Ears, the Ashes in their Throats, and the Incense in their Noses.*

Nay, even when *Rome* was besieged by *Alaricus*, in the Reign of *Honorius*, it was still full of Idols. *Zosimus* complains, that all things conspiring to the Ruin of that unhappy City, the Gods

Gods were not only robbed of their Ornaments, but even some of those that were of Gold or Silver were themselves melted down; of which Number was the Goddess of Fortitude, which from that time forward wholly abandoned the Romans. Though this be a lucky Hit, yet *Zosimus* will never make it pass upon us for the true Cause of the taking of that City.

I am in some suspence, whether upon the Credit of this Author, we may admit the following Story to be true. *Honorius* forbad all Persons that were not of the Christian Religion, to appear at Court, with a Shoulder-belt, or to have any Military Command. *Geberidus*, a Pagan and Barbarian too, but a Man of great Courage, who commanded the Troops that lay in *Dalmatia* and *Pannonia*, came no more into the Emperor's Presence, laid aside his Shoulder-belt, and forbore to exercise his Charge. *Honorius* one Day asked him, how it came to pass, that he came not to Court in his Turn, as it was his Duty to do? To which he replied, That there was a Law made, that dispossessed him of his Belt, and his Command. The Emperor told him, that Law was not for such Men as he was; but he answered, that he could not take the Benefit of any Distinction that separated him from those who professed the same Worship with himself. In effect, he would not undertake to Act again in his Command, till the Emperor himself, compelled to it by Necessity, repealed that Law. If this Story be true, then we may easily judge that *Honorius* contributed very little to the Downfal of the Heathen Religion.

But

But at last all Exercise of that Religion was prohibited on Pain of Death, by an Edict of the Emperour's, *Valentinian* the Third, and *Martian*, in the Year of Christ 451, and this was the last Blow given to that Superstition. And yet we find, that those very Emperours, who were so zealous for the Advancement of Christianity, did, for all that, themselves retain some Relicks of Heathenism, which served to augment their Authority. As for Example. They still took upon them the Title of *Pontifex Maximus*, that is to say, Chief Patriarch (as it were) of those who divined by the Flight of Birds, and the Entrails of Beasts, and of all the Colleges of Pagan Priests, and Supreme Head of all the ancient Romish Idolatry.

Zosimus pretends that *Constantine* the Great, *Valentinian* and *Valens* willingly accepted from the Heathen Priests both the Title and Habit of that Dignity, which according to Custom was presented to them at their Accession to the Empire; but that *Gratian* refused the Pontifical Office; which being related to the Priests, the principal amongst them replied in a great heat: *Si Princeps non vult appellari Pontifex, admodum brevi Pontifex Maximus fiet.* The sharpness of which Saying lies wholly in the Latin words, and it was grounded on the Revolt of *Maximus* against *Gratian* at that time, with a design to strip him of the Empire.

But the old Inscriptions still remaining, are a Testimony of this Matter, more to be credited than *Zosimus*. There we see the Title of *Pontifex Maximus* given to the Christian Emperours, even in the sixth Century. Two hundred

dred Years after Christianity had ascended the Throne, the * Emperor *Justin* amongst his other Titles assumes that of *Pontifex Maximus* in an Inscription, which he had caused to be made for the City of *Justinopolis* in *Istria*, which was called by his Name. * *Gruterus.*

To be one of the Gods of a false Religion was surely much worse than to be the *Pontifex Maximus* of it. Now the Heathens erected the Roman Emperors into Gods: And well they might, seeing they made the City of *Rome* a Goddess. The Emperors, *Theodosius* and *Arcadius*, tho' they were Christians, permitted *Symmachus*, that great Defender of the Heathen Religion, to give them the Title of (*Vestra Divinitas*, or) your Divinity: Which could be only taken in the Sence, and according to the Custom of the Pagans. And in some Inscriptions, which were set up in Honour of *Arcadius* and *Honorius*, these following Words are to be found: *Devotus Numini Majestatiq; eorum*; that is, *Devoted to their Divinity and Majesty.*

But the Christian Emperors went farther than the bare receiving of those Titles; for they gave them to themselves: As appears by the Constitutions (or Laws) of *Theodosius*, *Valentinian*, *Honorius* and *Arcadius*; wherein they sometimes call their Edicts, *Heavenly Statutes*, and *Divine* Oracles: And sometimes they say expressly, *The most happy Expedition of our Divinity*, &c.

It may be said, that this was nothing but the Stile of the Court of *Chancery*; but it was

certainly an unjustifiable and ridiculous Stile under the Heathen Religion its self, and a blasphemous one under the Christian. And therefore it is very wonderful, that such like Extravagancies should become so familiar and common a way of speaking, that they were in every Bodies Mouth.

The Truth is, that Flattery, which Subjects are so apt to bestow upon their Sovereigns, and the natural Fondness which Princes have for Praise, made the Custom of using these Expressions, last longer than it ought to have done. I confess that the Flattery and the Fondness in this case were each of them very extraordinary in its kind: And it is no wonder, since they are things uncapable of being limited to any Bounds. That a Man should be in earnest when he gives another Man the Title of a God is hard to conceive, and yet the frequency takes of the Wonder; but that this Man should accept the Title, and that with so much Easiness, as by degrees to come to the giving of it to himself (and all this while have a right Notion of what is truly called God.) This, I say, is a thing that I know not how to give such an Account of, as will save the Honour of Human Nature.

As for the Title of *Pontifex Maximus*, I do not see what was in it, that could flatter the Vanity of the Christian Emperors into the making it so much their Interest to conserve it: But, perhaps, they thought that it was of some use for the imprinting of a respectful Awe in the Minds of those that were still of the Heathen Religion: Or, it may be, they pleased them-

themselves with the Supremacy over Christians, which under the Ambiguity of that Title they assumed to themselves. In effect, upon certain Occasions they were Magisterial enough in their use of it: And some Authors would perswade us, that the Emperors quitted their Pretensions to this Title, out of Respect to the Pope; who, it seems, began to be apprehensive that they might make ill Uses of it.

But it is not so surprizing by far, to see these Heathen Remains continue for some time in the Christian Religion, as to see what was most barbarous, extravagant, and directly opposite to Reason and the common Interest of Mankind, keep such firm footing, as to be the last that left the Field of all the Pagan Superstitions, I mean, Human Sacrifices. That Religion was certainly very Fantastical and full of Variety; for it consisted of some things extremely frolick, and others no less mournful. In one place, the Ladies go to the Temples in a fit of Devotion, to offer their Favours to the first Comer: And in another place, the same Devotion causes the Throats of Men to be cut upon an Altar. These detestable Sacrifices were practised by all Nations: The Grecians celebrated them, as well as the Scythians, tho' not so often; and the Romans (for all that they obliged the Carthaginians, in a Treaty of Peace concluded between them, not to Sacrifice their Children to *Saturn*, according to the Custom derived from their Ancestors, the Phœnicians, yet) did themselves every Year offer up a Man to *Jupiter Latialis*. *Eusebius* cites *Porphyrius* for this, as a thing still in Usage

in his Days. *Lactantius* and *Prudentius*, the one in the beginning, and the other in the end of the fourth Age, are Evidences of the same thing, each of them for his own time. These Ceremonies, that were so full of Horrour, lasted as long as the Superstition of *Oracles*, which was only liable to the Reproach of Stupidity and fond Credulity.

CHAP. V.

That if Heathenism had not been abolish'd, yet Oracles *would have ceased; and the first particular Reason hereof.*

THE Downfal of Heathenism, when Christianity triumphed over it, could do no less than involve *Oracles* in the common Ruine with its self: But it may be farther ascerted that Christianity, even before it became the reigning Religion, was an irresistible Enemy to *Oracles*; for the Christians made it their Business to disabuse Mankind, and discover Impostures. And yet if the Christian Religion had never been, *Oracles* would for other Reasons have lost their Credit by degrees, and at last have quite fail'd.

It was observ'd that they began to degenerate from the very time when they left off giving their Answers in Verse. *Plutarch* has written a Tract expresly to enquire about the reason of this Change, wherein (according to the

the fashion of Greek Authors) he sets down all that could be said on this Subject, either true or false. First he says, That the God who inspires the Pythian Priestess proportions himself to her Capacity, and does not answer in Verse by her, unless she have a natural Faculty that way; for the Prediction only belongs to *Apollo*, but the manner of Expression to the Priestess. Thus it is not the Fault of the Musician, if he cannot make as good Melody with a Cittern as with a Lute; for the Property of the Instrument must be considered. Suppose, it had been the Custom for the *Oracle* to deliver its Answers in writing, could we reasonably deny that *Apollo* inspired 'em, unless the Priestess wrote 'em in a fair Hand. The Soul of the Propheteſs, when united to *Apollo*, is like an innocent Maid when she is first Married, who is ignorant both of the Pleasure and the Duty of her new Condition.

But why then did the Ancient Priestesses always answer in Verse? Were not they as pure and Virgin Souls, contracted to *Apollo?* To this *Plutarch* replies first of all, That even the ancient Priestesses did now and then speak in Prose. And besides this, in old times all People were born Poets; so that, as he tells us, they had no sooner drank a little freely, but they made Verses; they had no sooner cast their Eyes on a handsom Woman, but they were all Posie, and their very common Discourse fell naturally into Feet and Rhime: So that their Feasts and their Courtships were the most delectable things in the World. But now this Poetick Genius has deserted Man-

kind: and tho' our Passions be as ardent as those of our Ancestors, and we talk as much as they did, yet Love at present creeps in humble Prose. And even all the *Socrateses* and *Platoes*, who discourfed so much concerning that agreeable Passion, had not the least Skill in Poetry.

Now all this has too much Fancy and too little Truth in it, to deserve a serious Answer. But *Plutarch* gives us another Reason, which has something more of Probability; which is this, That the Ancients wrote always in Verse, whether they treated of Religion, Morality, Natural Philosophy or Astrology. *Orpheus* and *Hesiod*, whom every Body acknowledges for Poets, were Philosophers also; and *Parmenides*, *Xenophanes*, *Empedocles*, *Eudoxus*, and *Thales*, whom all Men own for Philosophers, were Poets too. It is very strange indeed that Poetry should be elder Brother to Prose, and that Men did not at first light upon the most natural and easie way of expressing their Thoughts; but it is very probable, that since all their Writings were as so many Precepts, they were shap'd into measured Lines, that they might be the more easily remembred, and therefore all their Laws and their Rules of Morality were in Verse. By this we may see that Poetry had a much more serious beginning than is usually imagin'd, and that the Muses have of late Days mightily deviated from their original Gravity. Who would imagine that the old Statutes should by right have been written in Metre, and *Chaucer*'s Tales in Prose? There was a necessity therefore, says *Plutarch*, that an-

ancient *Oracles* should be deliver'd in Verses, since all Matters of importance were so; for *Apollo* was then willing to follow the Mode of those Times, and when Prose came afterwards to be in use, he was for being in the Fashion still.

I am of the same Opinion my self, and believe that *Oracles* at first gave their Answers in Verse, both that they might be more easily remembred, and to comply with the Custom which had condemned Prose to be used only in trival Discourses. But History and Philosophy began to shake off those useless Chains about the Reign of *Cyrus*: For *Thales*, who lived at that time, was one of the last Poetick Philosophers; but *Apollo* continued to speak in Verse till about *Pyrrhus*'s Days, as *Cicero* informs us, which was about two hundred and thirty Years after *Cyrus*. Whence it appears, that Poetry being found suitable to the Dignity of *Oracles*, it was retain'd in Use at *Delphos*, as long as it was possible; till at last plain Prose getting the Victory, banish'd it quite from thence.

Plutarch could hardly be in earnest, when he said, That *Oracles* were therefore at last pronounced in Prose, because People began to require clearer Answers, and to be weary of the misterious Bombast of Verses. For whether it were the Gods, or but the Priests that spoke, I would fain know how Men durst accuse 'em of Obscurity.

But he has more Probability on his side, when he pretends, that Prophetick Versifying fell into Contempt, by being in use amongst those Fortune-tellers, who stroling about the High-ways, were consulted by the Rabble:

Now, the Priests who belonged to the Temples, scorn'd to use the same Customs in common with these Gypsies; for they thought themselves to be a nobler and graver sort of Fortune-tellers; which makes a mighty difference, I'll assure you, in this great Affair.

But *Plutarch* reserves his true Reason till last, which is, That in former times Men went to consult at *Delphos* only about Matters of the highest Consequence; as Wars, Building of Cities, Interest of Kings and Commonwealths; whereas now a-days, says he, every ordinary Person runs thither to ask the *Oracle*, If they shall Marry? If they shall buy a Slave? If they shall thrive by their Trade? and when a City sends thither, 'tis only to enquire, Whether their Lands will yield a good Crop, or their Cattle increase? These Questions deserve not the trouble of an Answer in Verse; for if *Apollo* should take that Pains, he would be like those Sophisters, who labour mightily to show their Learning, when there is no proper occasion for it.

But I come to that which was the most effectual Cause of the Ruine of *Oracles*: The Romans made themselves Masters of all *Greece*, and those Kindoms founded by *Alexander*'s Successors; and as soon as the Grecians had submitted to the Roman Yoke, from which they had no hopes of being ever free, they were no longer agitated with the continual Divisions and Quarels which had wont to harass those petty States, whose Interests were so mightily embroiled; for their common Masters made 'em all quiet, and Peace was the Product of their

Slave-

slavery. And I think, the Greeks had never happy Days till then; for they lived in a profound Tranquility, and in perfect Ease; they passed their time in their places of Exercise, in their Theatres, and in their Schools of Philosophy. They had publick Sports, Comedies, Disputations and Harangues; and for Men of their Genius, what could be desired more? But all this afforded little business for *Oracles*, and there was very seldom any occasion to importune the Delphian God. And it is very easie to imagine, that the Priests would not give themselves the trouble of answering in Verse, when they found their Trade fell off, and the Profit of it was not worth the while.

And as the Romans did the *Oracles* some prejudice by the Peace which they establish'd in *Greece*, so they did them more by the slight Esteem which they had of 'em themselves: for their Folly did not lye in that way; they addicted themselves only to the Books of the Sibyls, and to the Tuscan Divinations, which were performed by the Observations of the Flights of Birds, and the Entrails of sacrificed Beasts. Now the Maxims and Opinions of the Victors, easily obtain amongst the Conquered: and therefore it is no wonder that *Oracles*, being a Greek Invention, should follow the Fate of *Greece*; and that as with her they flourish'd in Prosperity, so with her they lost their ancient Glory.

But, for all this, we must acknowledge, that there were some *Oracles* in *Italy*. *Tiberius*, as *Suetonius* says, went to the *Oracle* of *Geryon* near *Padua*; where there was a certain Spring,

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if we will believe *Claudian*, which restored Speech to the Dumb, and healed all sorts of Diseases. *Suetonius* says further, that *Tiberius* had once a mind to destroy all the *Oracles* that were near *Rome*; but he was prevented by the Miracle of the *Praenestine* Lots, which, when they were brought up to *Rome* in a Box well lock'd and seal'd, were not to be found there, but when the Box was carried back to *Praeneste*, then they were found in it again.

To these Lots of *Praeneste* and those of *Antium*, we must add the Lots of the * Temple of *Hercules* which was at *Tiber*.

* *Statius.*

Pliny the Younger thus describes the *Oracle* of *Clitumnus*, the God of a certain River in *Umbria*: *The Temple is ancient and much revered; in it stands* Clitumnus *in a Roman Habit, and his Lots manifest his Presence and the Power of his Divinity. Round about it, there are several little Chapels, in some of which there are Fountains and Springs: for* Clitumnus *is, as it were, the Father of many other little Rivers which joyn with its Streams. There is a Bridge which separates the Sacred Part of these Waters from the Prophane. Above this Bridge Men may only go in Boats; but below it they may bathe themselves in the River.* This is the only River of my acquaintance that was Oracular, for they had other Business to do than to turn Fortune-tellers.

But there were *Oracles* at *Rome* it self. Had not *Æsculapius* one in his Temple which stood in an Island in the River *Tiber*? There has been found at *Rome* a piece of a Marble-table, wherein the Miracles of *Æsculapius* are engra-

ven

ven in Greek. One of the moſt conſiderable of which, is this that follows, tranſlated word for word from the Inſcription: *At the ſame time the* Oracle *made this Anſwer to a blind Man named* Caius: *He was bid go to the Sacred Altar, and Kneel down and Worſhip there; then to go from the Right-ſide to the Left, and lay his five Fingers upon the Altar, and afterwards clap his Hand upon his Eyes. After all this was done, the blind Man was reſtored to his Sight, as all the People were Witneſſes, and teſtified the Joy which they received in ſeeing ſuch mighty Wonders wrought in the Reign of our Emperor* Antoninus. The two other Cures are leſs miraculous; for one was of a Pleuriſie and the other of a loſs of Blood; (both of 'em very deſperate Diſeaſes without doubt) but the God preſcribed to the ſick Perſons ſome Pine-apples and Hony, with Wine and certain Aſhes; which were things that thoſe Men who are ſomething incredulous, will be apt to ſay are meerly Natural Remedies.

Theſe Inſcriptions, for all that they are in Greek, were certainly done at *Rome*; for the form of the Letters and the ſpelling, do not at all ſeem to be from the hand of ſome Grecian Sculptor. Beſides, tho' it be true, that the Romans made their Inſcriptions in Latin, yet they made ſome few in Greek, eſpecially when they had ſome particular reaſon for it. Now it is very probable, that no other Language but Greek was uſed in the Temple of *Æſculapius*, becauſe he was originally a Grecian God, and brought to *Rome* in that great Plague, of which every one knows the Story.

Thus

Thus we see that the *Oracle* of *Æsculapius* was not of a Roman Institution: and I doubt not, but that if it were an Enquiry worth the while, most of the Italian *Oracles* would be found to be of a Greek Original.

However it be, the smalness of the Number of the Italian *Oracles*, and even of those that were at *Rome* it self, makes but a very inconsiderable Exception to the generality of the Notion which we propose. *Æsculapius* dealt only in Physick, and concerned not himself in Matters of Government: and tho' he had a rare Knack at making blind Men see, yet I believe the Senate would have been loath to have depended upon his Advice in a Case even of the smallest importance. Private Persons amongst the Romans might give what Credit they listed to *Oracles*; but the State had little Faith in them. Thus the Sibyls Books and the Entrails of Beasts governed all. And so a vast number of Gods fell into Contempt, when People took notice that the Masters of the World would not vouchsafe to consult 'em.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

The second particular Cause of the Cessation of Oracles.

BUt I meet with a Difficulty in this Business, that I will not conceal: For if about the time of *Pyrrhus*, *Apollo* was reduced to Prose, this implies, that *Oracles* began then to grow into Discredit, and yet the Romans were not Masters of *Greece* till a long time after *Pyrrhus*; and between the Reign of *Pyrrhus* and the Romans Conquest of *Greece*, there were as many Wars and Commotions in that Country as ever, and by consequence as many important Subjects to consult the God of *Delphos* about.

This indeed is true; but we must also observe that about the time of *Alexander* the Great, a little before *Pyrrhus*'s Days, there appear'd in *Greece* certain great Sects of Philosophers, such as the Peripateticks and Epicureans, who made a Mock of *Oracles*. The Epicureans especially made Sport with the paltry Poetry that came from *Delphos*. For the Priests hammered out their Verses as well as they could, and they oftentimes committed Faults against the common Rules of *Prosodia*. Now those fleering Philosophers were mightily concerned that *Apollo*, the very God of Poetry should come so far behind *Homer*, who was but a meer Mortal, and was beholding to the same *Apollo* for his Inspirations.

It

It was to little purpose to excuse the matter, by saying, that the badness of the Verses was a kind of Testimony that they were made by a God, who nobly scorn'd to be tyed up to Rules and to be confined to the Beauty of a Style. For this made no impression upon the Philosophers; who, to turn his Answer into Ridicule, compared it to the Story of a Painter who being hired to draw the Picture of a Horse tumbling on his Back upon the Ground, drew one running full speed: and when he was told, that this was not such a Picture as was bespoke, he turned it upside down, and then ask'd if the Horse did not tumble upon his back now. Thus these Philosophers jeered such Persons, who by a way of arguing that would serve both ways, could equally prove that the Verses were made by a God, whether they were good or bad.

So that at length the Priests of *Delphos* being quite baffled with the Railleries of those learned Wits, renounced all Verses, at least as to the speaking them from the *Tripos*; for there were still some Poets maintain'd in the Temple, who at leisure turned into Verse, what the Divine Fury had inspired the Pithian Priestess withal in Prose. It was very pretty, that Men could not be contented to take the *Oracle* just as it came piping hot from the Mouth of their God. But perhaps, when they had come a great way for it, they thought it would look silly to to carry home an *Oracle* in Prose.

Nay the Gods, being willing to keep up the use of Verses as long as ever they could, did now and then stoop to borrow a line or two

out

out of *Homer*; whose Poetry, it seems, was better than their own. Of this there are abundance of Examples; but, both this borrowing of Verses, and keeping Poets at standing Wages in their Temples, may well pass for good Arguments that the old natural Poetry of *Oracles* had mightily lost its Reputation.

But these great Sects of Philosophers, Enemies to *Oracles*, must needs have done them a more essential Prejudice than the bare reducing them to Prose: For questionless they opened the Eyes of a great many rational Persons, and even amongst the Populace they made the Infallibility of those things lye under more suspicion than it had done before. For when *Oracles* first crept out into the World, Philosophy had not yet appear'd.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

The last particular Causes of the Cessation of Oracles.

THE Cheats of *Oracles* were so gross, that at last they were discovered by a thousand several Accidents. I suppose that *Oracles* were at first entertained with Greediness and Joy, because that nothing could be more convenient than to have Gods always ready at hand to answer every Question that might be suggested by Uneasiness or Curiosity: And I fansie, that it was with a great deal Reluctancy that People parted with this supposed Conveniency; and that *Oracles* would never have come to an end as long as Heathenism lasted, if they had not been the most impertinent Things in the World. But at last Men were forced to yield to their own Experiences and suffer themselves to be disabused.

To this the Priests gave no small help by the extreme Impudence which they used in the Exercise of their false Ministry; for they thought that things were brought to such a Point, that there was no Occasion for any Circumspection.

I say nothing of the Waggishness of the *Oracles*, which they sometimes delivered: For example, * To a Man that came to ask of the Deity, *What he should do to grow rich?* He answered very pleasantly, *That he need do no more than get all the Land between*

* *Athenæus.*

tween Sycione *and* Corinth. And sometimes the Consulter would make free with the God. *Polemon*, sleeping in the Temple of *Æsculapius*, to learn of him how to cure his Gout, the God appeared to him and told him, *That he must abstain from cold Drink.* *Polemon* replied, *You would be puzled then, my good Friend, if you were consulted about an Ox?* But these were but the Gayeties and Frolicks of the Priests, who would sometimes both give and take a Jest.

But it was still more remarkable, that the Gods never failed to fall in love with the fair Ladies; for they must come and pass away the Nights in their Temples, tricked up for the purpose by their own Husbands, and furnished with Presents to make the God amends for his Pains. 'Tis not to be doubted, but that the Doors of the Temple were shut up in the sight of the whole World, but who could secure the Husbands against the Passages under Ground?

For my part, I do not question but such Intrigues were often practised. And *Herodotus* writes, that in the eighth and uppermost Story of that lofty Tower belonging to the Temple of *Belus* in *Babylon*, there was a magnificent Bed, where there lay every Night a pretty Woman selected by the God. The like was done at *Thebes* in *Egypt*: And when the Priestess of the *Oracle* of *Patara* in *Lycia* was to prophesie, she must first take a Night's Lodging all alone in the Temple, whither *Apollo* came (forsooth) *to inspire her.*

All these things were practised during the darkest Mists of Paganism, and in times when Heathen Ceremonies were not to be contra-

dicted; but in the view of the very Christians themselves *Saturn* of *Alexandria* had such Women brought in the Night to his Temple, as he thought fit to chuse by the Mouth of his Priest *Tyrannus*. Many Women had received this Honour with a great deal of devout Respect, and none of them made any Complaints of *Saturn*, tho' he was the oldest and the least Gallant of all the Gods. But at last there was one, who having had her Night's Lodging in the Temple, considered with her self, that nothing had passed there, but what mortal Man was capable of performing, and *Tyrannus* could have done himself: And so she acquainted her Husband with her Suspicion, who hereupon accused *Tyrannus*. The unhappy Priest confessed all; and the Lord knows what a Scandal this gave to the Inhabitants of *Alexandria*.

Thus the Wickedness of the Priests, their Insolence, and several Chances that had discovered their Cheats, and the Obscurity, Uncertainty and Falseness of their Answers would at last have quite ruined the Reputation of *Oracles*, and entirely abolished them, even if Heathenism had not been come to a Period. But the thing became more unavoidable by the Addition of other Foreign Reasons: Such as first the Raillery of the Grecian Philosophers; then the little Use the Romans had always of them; and last of all the Christians utter Detestation of them, and putting a full End to them and Paganism together.

FINIS.

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